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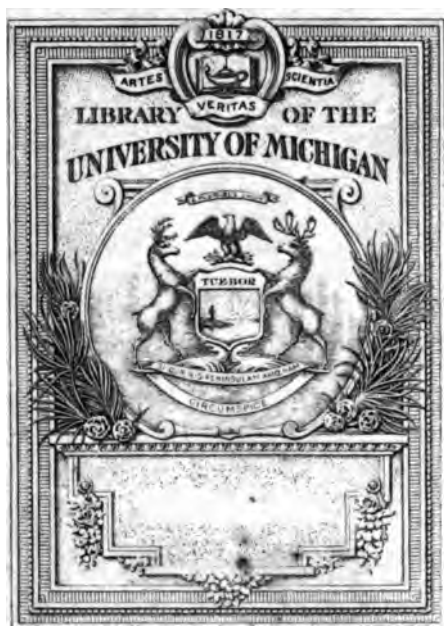
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## **SOME ASPECTS OF THACKERAY**





#701



**WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY**

**From an unpublished water-color drawing by W. Drummond, 1850**

*By permission of Major William H. Lambert*

*Frontispiece*

1. The first part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the various methods of determining the rate of growth of the economy.

2. The second part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the various methods of determining the rate of growth of the economy.

3. The third part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the various methods of determining the rate of growth of the economy.



# SOME ASPECTS OF THACKERAY

BY

LEWIS MELVILLE

AUTHOR OF "THE LIFE OF WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY"  
"THE THACKERAY COUNTRY," ETC.

*Illustrated*

BOSTON  
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1911

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**TO**  
**FREDERICK S. DICKSON**





## AUTHOR'S NOTE

THE papers entitled "Thackeray and the Dignity of Literature," "Thackeray and the Newgate School of Fiction," and "Some First Editions of Thackeray" are now printed for the first time. The other articles, which have appeared in various English (and sometimes also in American) reviews and magazines, have been revised, and in some cases considerably expanded. I am indebted to Mr. W. L. Courtney for permission to include "Thackeray as a Reader and Critic of Books," and "Thackeray's Ballads," which appeared in the *Fortnightly Review*, and to Messrs. Macmillan and Co., Ltd., for permission to include "Thackeray and Dickens" which appeared in *Temple Bar*. With regard to "Thackeray and his Illustrators," Messrs. Smith, Elder and Co. have kindly allowed me to

## **viii Some Aspects of Thackeray**

insert reproductions of several illustrations, including the late George du Maurier's illustration from "Esmond," and Messrs. J. M. Dent and Co., Ltd., that of Mr. Brock's illustration to "The Proser." Major William H. Lambert, of Philadelphia, has kindly sent me several photographs taken from portraits of Thackeray in his possession, for reproduction in this volume.

**LEWIS MELVILLE.**

**HARPENDEN, ENGLAND,  
June, 1911.**

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# SOME ASPECTS OF THACKERAY

## CHAPTER I

### *Thackeray and the Dignity of Literature*

**T**HACKERAY was always proud to hold a brief for the dignity of his calling and it was, therefore, with no little irritation that one day early in 1850 he found himself arraigned by two London papers, the *Examiner* and the *Morning Chronicle*, by the latter for "fostering a baneful prejudice" against literary men; by the former for "stooping to flatter" this prejudice in the public mind, and condescending to caricature his literary fellow-labourers in order to pay court to "the non-literary class." The attack was based upon the portrayal of the literary men who figured in the novel of "Pendennis." Thackeray's reply was very much to the point. In the first place he

## 2 Some Aspects of Thackeray

denied that the characters were exaggerated. "I have seen the booksellers whom Bludyer robbed of his boots: I have carried money, and from a noble brother man-of-letters, to some one, not unlike Shandon, in prison, and have watched the beautiful devotion of his wife in that dreary place," he wrote. "Why are these things not to be described if they illustrate, as they appear to do, that strange and awful struggle of good and wrong which takes place in our hearts and in the world?" In the second place, he expressed the opinion that he was entirely justified in what he had written. "I hope," he said, "that a comic writer, because he describes one author as improvident and another as a parasite, may not only be guiltless of a desire to vilify his profession, but may really have its honour at heart. If there are no spendthrifts or parasites amongst us, the satire becomes unjust; but if such exist, or have existed, they are as good subjects for comedy as men of other callings. I never heard that the Bar felt itself aggrieved because *Punch* chose to describe Mr. Dunup's notorious state of

### The Dignity of Literature 3

insolvency; or that the picture of Stiggins in 'Pickwick' was intended as an insult to all Dissenters; or that all the attorneys in the empire were indignant at the famous history of the firm of Quirk, Gammon, and Snap. Are we to be passed over because we are faultless, or because we cannot afford to be laughed at? And if every character in a story is to represent a class, not an individual — if every bad figure is to have its obliged contrast of a good one, and a balance of vice and virtue is to be struck — novels, I think, would become impossible, as they would be intolerably stupid and unnatural, and there would be a lamentable end of writers and readers of such compositions."

Thirdly, he laughed to scorn the notion that men of letters as a class were looked at askance by the non-literary class. "Does any man who has written a book worth reading — any poet, novelist, man of science — lose reputation by his character for genius or for learning?" he asked. "Does he not, on the contrary, get friends, sympathy, ap-

#### 4 Some Aspects of Thackeray

plause — money, perhaps? — all good and pleasant things in themselves, and not ungenerously awarded, as they are honestly won. That generous faith in men of letters, that kindly regard in which the whole reading nation holds them, appear to me to be so clearly shown in our country every day that to question them would be as absurd as, permit me to say for my part, it would be ungrateful. What is it that fills mechanics' institutes in the great provincial towns when literary men are invited to attend their festivals? Has not every literary man of mark his friends and his circle, his hundreds, or his tens of thousands, of readers? And has not every one had from these constant and affecting testimonials of the esteem in which they hold him? It is, of course, one writer's lot, from the nature of his subject or of his genius, to command the sympathies or awaken the curiosity of many more readers than shall choose to listen to another author; but surely all get their hearing. The literary profession is not held in disrepute; nobody wants to disparage it; no

## The Dignity of Literature 5

man loses his social rank, whatever it may be, by practising it. On the contrary, the pen gives a place in the world to men who had none before — a fair place, fairly achieved by their genius, as any other degree of eminence is by any other kind of merit.” The substance of this passage he repeated, when in the following year he replied for Literature at the Royal Literary Fund’s Annual Dinner. “We don’t want patrons, we want friends; and I thank God we have them; and as for any idea that our calling is despised by the world, I do, for my part, protest against and deny the whole statement,” he declared. “I have been in all sorts of society in this world, and I have never been despised that I know of. I don’t believe there has been a literary man of the slightest merit or of the slightest mark who did not greatly advance himself by his literary labours. I see along this august table gentlemen whom I have had the honour of shaking by the hand, and gentlemen whom I should never have called my friends but for the humble literary labours I have been engaged

## 6 Some Aspects of Thackeray

in. And therefore I say, don't let us be pitied any more."

Thackeray had little patience with those men of letters who suffered from the impression that they were despised and with those who made strenuous efforts to combat a prejudice that was non-existent. "Instead of accusing the public of persecuting and disparaging us as a class, it seems to me that men of letters had best silently assume that they are as good as any other gentlemen, nor raise piteous controversies upon a question which all people of sense must take to be settled. If I sit at your table, I suppose that I am my neighbour's equal, as that he is mine. If I begin straightway with a protest of 'Sir, I am a literary man, but I would have you to know I am as good as you,' which of us is it that questions the dignity of the literary profession — my neighbour, who would like to eat his soup in quiet, or the man of letters, who commences the argument?" Indeed, he thought the man of letters received more sympathy than was due to him. "A literary man," he wrote in

## The Dignity of Literature 7

"Pendennis," "has often to work for his bread against time, or against his will, or in spite of his health, or of his indolence, or of his repugnance to the subject on which he is called to exert himself, just like any other daily toiler. When you want to make money by Pegasus (as he must, perhaps, who has no other saleable property) farewell poetry and aerial flights: Pegasus only rises now like Mr. Green's balloon, at periods advertised beforehand, and when the spectator's money has been paid. Pegasus trots in harness, over the stony pavement, and pulls a cart or cab behind him. Often Pegasus does his work with panting sides and trembling knees, and not seldom gets a cut of the whip of the driver. Do not let us, however, be too prodigal of our pity upon Pegasus. There is no reason why this animal should be exempt from labour, or illness, or decay, any more than any of the other creatures of God's world. If he gets the whip, Pegasus very often deserves it, and I for one am quite ready to protest . . . against the doctrine which some poetical sympathisers are in-



## 8 Some Aspects of Thackeray

clined to put forward, viz., that men of letters, and what is called genius, are to be exempt from the prose duties of this daily bread-wanting, tax-paying life, and are not to be made to work and pay like their neighbours."

If on the one hand Thackeray vehemently protested against the idea that those who followed the pursuit of letters required pity and sympathy, on the other he was the first to admit that the status of men of letters as a class might be improved. "The money-prizes which the chief among them get are not so high as those which fall to men of other callings—to bishops, or to judges, or to opera-singers, and actors; nor have they received stars and garters as yet, or peerages and governorships of islands, such as fall to the lot of military officers." Anthony Trollope has stated that Thackeray held strong views that much was due by the Queen's ministers to men of letters, and he added that Thackeray "no doubt had his feelings of slighted merit because no part of the debt was paid to him." Thackeray

## The Dignity of Literature 9

probably would have liked a baronetcy or a barony, and as a representative man of letters he might well have been created Lord Thackeray of Brompton. It was not, however, that he was particularly desirous of any such distinction for himself, but he thought if titles and stars and ribands are good for soldiers and sailors and statesmen and artists and civil servants, why should they be withheld from authors? He attributed the fact that the Fountain of Honour did not play upon men of letters to their comparative poverty. "Directly men of letters get rich, they will come in for their share of honour too," he declared.

While Thackeray thus declared that men of letters should share in the rewards for meritorious services distributed by the government, he confessed frankly that he did not see how these honours were to be distributed. "I have heard, in a lecture about George the Third, that, at his accession, the King had a mind to establish an Order for literary men," he wrote in a "Roundabout Paper." "It was to have been called the

## 10 Some Aspects of Thackeray

Order of Minerva — I suppose with an Owl for a badge. The knights were to have worn a star of sixteen points, and a yellow ribbon; and good old Samuel Johnson was talked of as President, or Grand Cross, or Grand Owl, of the society. Now about such an order as this there certainly may be doubts. Consider the claimants, the difficulty of settling their claims, the rows and squabbles amongst the candidates, and the subsequent decision of posterity. Dr. Beattie would have ranked as first poet, and twenty years after the sublime Mr. Hayley would, no doubt, have claimed the Grand Cross. Mr. Gibbon would not have been eligible, on account of his dangerous freethinking opinions; and her sex, as well as her republican sentiments, might have interfered with the knighthood of the immortal Mrs. Catharine Macaulay. How Goldsmith would have paraded the ribbon at Madame Cornelys', or the Academy dinner! How Peter Pindar would have railed at it! Fifty years later, the noble Scott would have worn the Grand Cross and deserved it; but Gifford would have had it;

## The Dignity of Literature 11

and Byron, and Shelley, and Hazlitt, and Hunt would have been without it; and had Keats been proposed as officer, how the Tory prints would have yelled with rage and scorn! Had the star of Minerva lasted to our present time — but I pause, not because the idea is dazzling, but too awful. Fancy the claimants, and the row about their precedence! . . . Fancy the struggle! Fancy the squabble! Fancy the distribution of prizes!”

The bestowal of pensions was open to the same objections. “Even that prevailing sentiment which regrets that means should not be provided for giving them leisure, for enabling them to perfect great works in retirement, that they should waste away their strength with fugitive literature, etc., I hold to be often uncalled for and dangerous,” Thackeray wrote in his appreciation of Blanchard. “I believe, if most men of letters were to be pensioned, I am sorry to say I believe they would n’t work at all; and of others, that the labour which is to answer the calls of the day is the one best suited

## 12 Some Aspects of Thackeray

to their genius. Suppose Sir Robert Peel were to write to you, and, enclosing a cheque for twenty thousand pounds, instruct you to pension any fifty deserving authors, so that they might have leisure to retire and write 'great' work; on whom would you fix?"

The dignity of literature, however, depends, not on its rewards, but upon the dignity of the men of letters; and the contempt that was felt for Grub Street in the eighteenth century was, as Thackeray was at pains to point out, largely the fault of Grub Street, too many of the inhabitants of which were intemperate, improvident, and far from respectable, and not only the minor lights but some of the great men also. Things, happily, have changed, and if Grub Street is still with us, it is a more temperate, more clean-living neighbourhood than ever it was before, and its inhabitants, as well as the literary man in general, have a lofty ideal of their calling. Jealousy was once the bane of the calling; to-day that noxious passion is kept, on the whole, well under

## The Dignity of Literature 13

control. The Croker-Macaulay feud could not to-day be fought out in the quarterlies. "Human nature is not altered since Richardson's time; and if there are rakes, male and female, as there were a hundred years since, there are, in like manner, envious critics now, as then," Thackeray wrote in his paper on Fielding. "How eager are they to predict a man's fall, how unwilling to acknowledge his rise! If a man write a popular work, he is sure to be snarled at; if a literary man rise to eminence out of his profession, all his old comrades are against him. They can't pardon his success: would it not be wiser for gentlemen of the pen to do as they do in France, have an *esprit de corps*, declare that their body and calling are as honourable as any other, feel their own power, and, instead of crying down any member of their profession who happens to light on a prize, support him with all their strength? The condition of literary men might be very soon changed by a manly literary union of this kind."

Thackeray, towards the end of his life,

## 14 Some Aspects of Thackeray

laid down once for all the qualities that ensure the dignity of the calling to which he belonged. "What ought to be the literary man's point of honour now-a-days?" he wrote in a "Roundabout Paper." "Suppose, friendly reader, you are one of the craft; what legacy would you like to leave to your children? First of all (and by Heaven's gracious help) you would pray and strive to give them such an endowment of love, as should last certainly for all their lives, and perhaps be transmitted to their children. You would (by the same aid and blessing) keep your honour pure, and transmit a name unstained to those who have a right to bear it. You would, though this quality of giving is one of the easiest of the literary man's qualities — you would, out of your earnings, great or small, be able to help a poor brother in need, to dress his wounds, and, if it were but twopence, to give him succour. . . . You will, if letters be your vocation, find saving harder than giving and spending. To save be your endeavour too, against the night's coming when no man may

## The Dignity of Literature 15

work; when the arm is weary with the long day's labour; when the brain perhaps grows dark; when the old, who can labour no more, want warmth and rest, and the young ones call for supper." In yet another "Round-about Paper" Thackeray, writing after the death of Washington Irving and Macaulay, was happy to point his arguments on the dignity of literature by showing how they fulfilled his ideal of what a man of letters should be. "'Be a good man, my dear!' One can't but think of these last words of the veteran Chief of Letters, who had tasted and tested the value of worldly success, admiration, prosperity. Was Irving not good, and, of his works, was not his life the best part? In his family gentle, generous, good-humoured, affectionate, self-denying: in society, a delightful example of complete gentlemanhood; quite unspoiled by prosperity; never obsequious to the great (or worse still, to the base and mean, as some public men are forced to be in his and other countries); eager to acknowledge every contemporary's merit; always kind and affable



## 16 Some Aspects of Thackeray

to the young members of his calling; in his professional bargains and mercantile dealings delicately honest and grateful; one of the most charming masters of our lighter language; the constant friend to us and our nation; to men of letters doubly dear, not for his wit and genius merely, but as an exemplar of goodness, probity, and pure life. . . . Here are two examples of men most differently gifted; each pursuing his calling; each speaking his truth as God bade him; each honest in his life; just and irreproachable in his dealings; dear to his friends; honoured by his country; beloved at his fireside. It has been the fortunate lot of both to give incalculable happiness and delight to the world, which thanks them in return with an immense kindness, respect, affection. It may not be our chance, brother scribe, to be endowed with such merit, or rewarded with such fame. But the rewards of these men are rewards paid *to our service*. We may not win the baton or epaulettes; but God give us strength to guard the honour of the flag!"

## The Dignity of Literature 17

To such qualities as these two men, to mention no others, possessed, fame comes second. That is an accident, a happy, glorious accident for those upon whom its mantle falls. It may come with a first book, it may come in middle life, it may come at the end of a career hitherto obscure, it may come after death, it may come and go, it may come not at all. A man can but do his best, and take such reward as may come his way. "The literary character, let us hope or admit, writes quite honestly; but no man supposes he would work perpetually but for money. And as for immortality, it is quite beside the bargain," Thackeray wrote. "Is it reasonable to look for it, or to pretend that you are actuated by a desire to attain it? Of all the quill-drivers, how many have ever drawn that prodigious prize? Is it even fair to ask that many should? Out of a regard for poor dear prosperity and men of letters to come, let us be glad that the great immortality number comes up so rarely. Mankind would have no time otherwise, and would be so gorged with old masterpieces,

## 18 Some Aspects of Thackeray

that they would not occupy themselves with new, and future literary men would have no chance of a livelihood." There are great men and little men, working in the field of letters as in other fields, and all cannot hope for the spoils that come to the victor. "In the battle of life are we all going to try for the honours of championship? If we can do our duty, if we can keep our place pretty honourably throughout the combat, let us say. *Laus Deo* at the end of it, as the firing ceases, and the night falls upon the field." Thus the Weekday Preacher on "The Chances of the Literary Profession." "To do your work honestly, to amuse and instruct your reader of to-day, to die when your time comes, and go hence with as clean a breast as may be; may these be all yours and ours, by God's will. Let us be content with our status as literary craftsmen, telling the truth as far as may be, hitting no foul blow, condescending to no servile puffery, filling not a very lofty, but a manly and honourable part."

"Ah! ye knights of the pen! May honour

## The Dignity of Literature 19

be your shield and truth tip your lances! Be gentle to all gentle people. Be modest to women. Be tender to children. And as for the Ogre Humbug, out sword, and have at him."

In this passage Thackeray outlined his own course. Truth was the first consideration in his eyes, and it was the want of truth in such works as are commonly grouped as the Newgate School of Fiction that made him attack them as being dishonest and therefore immoral. "If truth is not always pleasant, at any rate truth is best, from whatever chair — from those whence grave writers or thinkers argue, as from that at which the storyteller sits," Thackeray wrote in the Preface to "Pendennis;" and elsewhere, in the lecture on "Charity and Humour," he enlarged on the theme. "I can't help telling the truth as I view it, and describing what I see. To describe it otherwise than it seems to me would be falsehood in that calling in which it has pleased Heaven to place me; treason to that conscience which says that men are weak; that truth must be told;

## 20 Some Aspects of Thackeray

that fault must be owned; that pardon must be prayed for; and that Love reigns supreme over all." Thackeray took his profession very seriously, and never undervalued the responsibilities of the writer, even of the novelist, who, in his opinion, should be a teacher. "I assure you these tokens of what I can't help acknowledging as popularity, make me humble as well as grateful, and make me feel an almost awful sense of the responsibility which falls upon a man in such a station. Is it deserved or undeserved? — Who is this that sets up to preach to mankind, and to laugh at many things which men reverence? I hope I may be able to tell the truth always, and to see it aright, according to the eyes which God Almighty gives me. And if, in the exercise of my calling, I get friends and find encouragement and sympathy, I need not tell you how very much I feel and am thankful for this kind of support. Indeed I can't reply lightly upon this subject or feel otherwise than very grave when people praise me as you do." Thus he wrote to Dr. John Brown, who had been

## The Dignity of Literature 21

instrumental in organising a testimonial to him; and in reply to the Rev. Joseph Sortain, who had sent him a volume of sermons, "I want, too," he wrote, "to say in my way that love and truth are the greatest of Heaven's commandments and blessings to us; that the best of us, the many especially who pride themselves on their virtue most, are wretchedly weak, vain and selfish; and to preach such a charity at least as a common sense of our shame and unworthiness might inspire, to us poor people." Therein may be found Thackeray's confession of faith as a novelist and weekday preacher.

## CHAPTER II

### *Thackeray as a Reader and Critic of Books*

**S**CARCELY a month passes without an article on Thackeray in some magazine or review. Reminiscences of Thackeray, Thackeray's Homes and Haunts, Thackeray's Originals, Thackeray in the United States, Thackeray as an Orator, Thackeray and Dickens, Thackeray as a Writer, Thackeray as Artist, Thackeray as Art-Critic, Thackeray and the Stage, Thackeray and *Punch*, are among recent headings. It is strange, therefore, when it might be assumed that this author had been treated from every standpoint, to find that no one has thought it worth while to discourse of him as a reader and critic of books.

As a boy Thackeray was fond of books, and at Cambridge he was an omnivorous reader, principally, however, of fiction, poetry, and history. History, indeed, was one of

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his favourite studies. "Read a tremendous lot of history," he advised a young cousin one day as they were leaving the Reading Room of the British Museum, where he had been searching for a book that would tell him, not of the battles of Wolfe, the hero of Quebec, but, figuratively speaking, of the colour of his breeches. Though in later years, speaking of this branch of learning, he remarked to Mr. Jeffreson: "There's nothing new, and there's nothing true, and it don't much signify," yet as a young man he was a stickler for the dignity of history. Reviewing "The Duchess of Marlborough's Private Correspondence" in the *Times* (1838) he expressed his disappointment that "the dignity of history sadly diminishes as we grow better acquainted with the materials which compose it. In our orthodox history books, the characters move on as in a gaudy play-house procession, a glittering pageant of kings and warriors and stately ladies majestically appearing and passing away. Only he who sits very near the stage can discover of what poor stuff the spectacle is



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made. The kings are poor creatures, taken from the dregs of the company; the noble knights are dirty dwarfs in tin-foil; the fair ladies are painted hags, with cracked feathers and soiled trains. One wonders how gas and distance could ever have rendered them so bewitching. The perusal of letters like these produces a very similar disenchantment, and the great historical figures dwindle down into the common proportions as we come to view them closely. Kings, Ministers, and Generals form the principal *dramatis personæ*; and, if we may pursue the stage parallel a little further, eye never lighted upon a troupe more contemptible. Weighty political changes had been worked in the country, others threatened equally great. Great questions were agitated — whether the Protestant Religion should be the creed of the State, and the Elector of Hanover a King, or whether Papacy should be restored, and James III. placed on the throne — whether the continental despotism aimed at by Louis should be established, or the war continued to maintain the balance of power

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in Europe — on these points our letter-writers hardly deign to say a word. The political question is whether Harley should be in or Godolphin, how Mrs. Masham, the chambermaid, can be checked or won over, how the Duchess of Marlborough can regain her lost influence over the queen, or whether the Duke is strong enough to do without it, can force his Captain-Generalcy for life, and compel the queen to ensure to his daughters the pension and places of their mother.” If the Duchess of Marlborough’s correspondence disenchanted Thackeray, disgust was the result of a perusal of a volume entitled “A Diary relative to George IV. and Queen Caroline,” and he reviewed it both in the *Times* and in *Fraser’s Magazine*, with a virulence that, even in those early days, was unusual with him. “We may read this diary,” Thackeray concluded his review in the *Times*, “and say, indeed, it is a ridicule to bear a towering name, or to pretend to the old virtue which characterized it, or to the honour which formerly belonged to it. It is ridicule indeed to come of a noble race,

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and uphold the well-known honour of an ancient line. What matters it if you can read in your family record the history of a thousand years of loyalty and courage, of all that is noble in sentiment, honest and brave in action? — The pride of ancestors is a faded superstition — the emulation of them a needless folly. There is no need now to be loyal to your prince, or tender to his memory. Take his bounty while living, share his purse and his table, gain his confidence, and learn his secrets, flatter him, cringe to him, vow to him an unbounded fidelity — and when he is dead, *write a diary and betray him!*” It was in quite another spirit that he criticised Carlyle’s “French Revolution.” While regretting that “never did a man’s style so mar his subject and dim his genius,” Thackeray admitted, almost to their fullest extent, the highest qualities with which the most enthusiastic of the historian’s followers endowed him; praised him for his lofty and noble impartiality; and especially singled out for admiration the story of the fall of the Bastille, and the arrest and trial

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of Danton and his colleagues. "The reader needs not be told that this book is written in an eccentric prose, here and there disfigured by grotesque conceits and images; but, for all this, it betrays most extraordinary powers — learning, observation, and humour," Thackeray wrote. "Above all, it has no CANT. It teems with sound, hearty philosophy (besides certain transcendentalisms which we do not pretend to understand), it possesses genius, if any book ever did. It wanted no more for keen critics to cry fie upon it! Clever critics have such an eye for genius, that when Mr. Bulwer published his forgotten book concerning Athens, they discovered that no historian was like to him; and that he, on his Athenean hobby, had quite outtrotted safely Mr. Gibbon, and with the same creditable unanimity they cried down Mr. Carlyle's history, opening upon it a hundred little piddling sluices of small wit, destined to wash the book sheer away; and lo! the book remains, it is only the poor wit which has run dry." Carlyle, however, was not quite satisfied with this praise. "I

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understand there have been many reviews of a mixed character," he wrote to his brother. "I got one in the *Times* last week. The writer is one Thackeray, a half monstrous Cornish giant, kind of painter, Cambridge man, and Paris newspaper correspondent, who is now writing for his life in London. . . . His article is rather like him, and, I suppose, calculated to do the book good."

It is not generally known that Thackeray on two occasions nearly entered the lists as an historian. The first time was in 1844, when he undertook to write a *Life of Talleyrand* for Messrs. Chapman and Hall. The biography was actually advertised, but Thackeray went Eastward Ho! and the publishers issued in its place the "*Notes of a Journey from Cornhill to Grand Cairo.*" The second time was sixteen years later, when he was asked to continue Macaulay's history. This offer he neither accepted nor yet definitely refused. "Queen Anne has long been my ambition," he wrote to Sir John (then Dr.) Skelton, "but she will take many a long year's labour, and I can't ask

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any other writer to delay on my account. At the beginning of the year I had prepared an announcement stating that I was engaged on that history; but kept it back, as it was necessary that I should pursue my old trade of novelist for some time yet to come. Meanwhile her image stands before St. Paul's, for all the world to look at, and who knows but some one else may be beforehand with both of us, and sketch her off while we are only laying the palette."

Thackeray's first known pronouncement about a book occurs in a letter written at Cambridge, saying he would bring home with him Shelley's "Revolt of Islam," "a most beautiful poem — though the story is absurd, and the republican sentiments conveyed in it, if possible, more absurd." But, after a short interval, he wrote that he would not take the poem with him because "it is an odd kind of book, containing poetry that would induce one to read it through, and sentiments which might strongly incline one to throw it on the fire." Shelley's works certainly interested him at this time, and

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when the scheme of a university magazine to be called *The Chimæra*, was mooted, he volunteered to contribute an "Essay on Shelley." It is said that he actually wrote this paper at Paris during the Long Vacation in 1829, but the bibliographers have failed to trace the publication of either magazine or article.

During the few months Thackeray spent at Weimar he read Körner, and sent translations of some poems to his mother. He also read "Faust," but without much enthusiasm. "Of course I am delighted," he said; "but not to that degree I expected." On the other hand, he had unbounded admiration for Schiller. "I have been reading Shakespeare in German. If I could ever do the same for Schiller in English, I should be proud of having conferred a benefit on my country. I do believe him to be after Shakespeare, 'the poet'!" He never attempted this gigantic task, though when a certain Fräulein, whom he affected to admire, lost her heart to a gentleman in the Guards, with magnificent waistcoats and ten thousand a

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year, he bemoaned his fate by translating merrily some lines of his favourite author: —

“The world is empty,  
This heart is dead.  
Its hopes and its aches  
For ever are fled.”

When Thackeray was told that some one had translated “Wilhelm Tell” into English, and while so doing had improved the play, he replied that *that* was quite unnecessary. No doubt this preference for the lesser genius may be traced to the fact that while “Faust,” in its essence, is metaphysical, the predominant feature of “Wilhelm Tell” is the love of home. Love of home appealed to him, while the former did not attract him, for though after reading Cousin’s “History of Philosophy,” he admitted that he had been so interested that he thought the excitement of metaphysics must equal almost that of gambling, it may safely be assumed that he never pursued the study.

Thackeray’s reading when he was abroad in the thirties was not very deep. Of the great French writers he found little to say.



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Montaigne, as one may guess from his later writings, he loved. He did not think Victor Hugo more poetical than Voltaire; and, while admiring "*La Peau de Chagrin*," found the characterisation feeble. He would have liked Scribe if all the characters in the plays did not break the Seventh Commandment. "Of the drama, Victor Hugo and Dumas are the well-known and respectable guardians," he wrote in 1840. "Every piece Victor Hugo has written since '*Hernani*' has contained a monster — a delightful monster, saved by one virtue. There is Triboulet, a foolish monster; *Lucrèce Borgia*, a maternal monster; *Mary Tudor*, a religious monster; *Monsieur Quasimodo*, a hump-backed monster; and others that might be named whose monstrosities we are induced to pardon — nay, admiringly to witness — because they are agreeably mingled with some exquisite display of affection. And, as the great Hugo has one monster to each play, the great Dumas has, ordinarily, half-a-dozen, to whom murder is nothing; common intrigue, and simple breakage of the

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before-mentioned Commandment, nothing; but who live and move in a vast delightful complication of crime that cannot be easily conceived in England, much less described." But, later, he was a fervent admirer of the "Mousquetaires" series. "All the forenoon I read with intense delight a novel called 'Le Vicomte de Bragelonne,' " he told Mrs. Brookfield; "a continuation of the famous 'Mousquetaires,' and just as interesting, keeping one panting from volume to volume, longing for more." "Dumas is wonderful. He is better than Walter Scott," he said on another occasion. "I came near writing a book on the same subject, 'Les Trois Mousquetaires,' and taking Monsieur D'Artagnan for my hero. D'Artagnan was a real character of the age of Louis XIV., and wrote his own 'Mémoires.' I remember picking up a dingy copy of them on an old bookstall in London, price sixpence, and intended to make something of it. But Dumas got ahead of me." "His good spirits never seem to change," Thackeray said to John Esten Cooke. "He amuses you and keeps you in

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a good humour, which is not the effect produced on me by many writers. Some books please me and enliven me, and others depress me. I never could read 'Don Quixote' with pleasure; the book makes me sad." Thackeray never liked the works of Eugène Sue. "Eugène Sue has written a very great number of novels — beginning with maritime novels in the Satanic style, so to speak, full of crime and murder of every description. He met in his early work with no very great success. He gave up the indecencies of language and astonished the world with 'Mathilde' three years since" (*i. e.*, in 1842), "which had the singular quality among French novels of containing no improprieties of expression. In my mind it is one of the most immoral books in the world. 'The Mysteries of Paris' followed, with still greater success, and the same cleverness of construction, and the same sham virtue." This opinion he expressed in a letter to Macvey Napier, the editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, to which periodical he desired to contribute. The outcome of the corre-



**NATHANIEL PARKER WILLIS**

**After an engraving from the drawing by G. W. Flagg**

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spondence was an amusing article on N. P. Willis's "Dashes at Life."

While in Paris Thackeray translated "Le Bon Ange," verses introduced into Dumas' play, "Don Juan de Marana," which may be found in "The Paris Sketch Book," and he also wrote the delightful "Imitations of Béranger." In Germany he contrived to imbue himself with the spirit in which Uhland wrote his poems; and among the "Ballads" may be found admirable renderings of "Es pflückte Blümlein mannigfalt" ("The Chaplet"), and "Da liegen sie alle, die grauen Höhen" ("The King on the Tower").

It was in the *National Standard*, of which he was eventually proprietor and editor, that Thackeray's first "official" criticism appeared. The book reviewed was Robert Montgomery's "Woman: the Angel of Life." The notice is only remarkable for the concluding sentences, which follow an extract of fourteen lines of the poem. "These are nice verses. On examination, we find that the compositor, by some queer blunder, has printed them backwards; but as it does not

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seem to spoil the sense, we shall not give him the trouble to set them up again. They are as good one way as the other." Mr. Yellowplush may have been thinking of this when he took a sentence from "The Sea-Captain," a play by "Sawedwadgeorgeearlittnbulwig;" tried it every way, "backards, forards, and in all sorts of trancepositions," and found "all which are as sensible as the fust passidge."

There is no doubt that at this time Thackeray, like Pendennis, would not have hesitated at twenty-four hours' notice to pass an opinion upon the greatest scholars or to give a judgment upon the encyclopædia.

One of his earliest *Fraser* papers was a violent onslaught on the "Keepsake" sort of production. "Miss Landon, Miss Mitford, or my Lady Blessington, writes a song . . . about 'Water-Lily,' chilly, stilly, shivering beside a streamlet, plighted, blighted, love-benighted, falsehood sharper than a gimlet, lost affection, recollection, cut connexion, tears in torrents, true-love token, spoken, broken, sighing, dying, girl of Florence; and

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so on. The poetry is quite worthy of the picture, and a little sham sentiment is employed to illustrate a little sham art. . . . It cannot be supposed that Miss Landon, a woman of genius — Miss Mitford, a lady of exquisite wit and taste — should, of their own accord, sit down to indite namby-pamby verses about silly, half-decent pictures; or that Jenkins, Powis, Meadows and Co. are not fatigued with the paltry labour assigned to them. . . . Who sets them to this wretched work? To paint those eternal fancy portraits of ladies in voluptuous attitudes and various stages of *déshabille*, to awaken the dormant sensibilities of misses in their teens, or tickle the worn-out palates of rakes and *roués*? What a noble occupation for a poet! What a delicate task for an artist!”

He was as bitter when writing of Miss Landon’s “Ethel Churchill” and of Mrs. Trollope’s “Vicar of Wrexhill,” in which she abused those who interpreted the Scriptures in other ways than she. “Oh! we repeat once more, that ladies would make puddings



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and mend stockings! that they would not meddle with religion (what is styled religion, we mean), except to pray to God, to live quietly among their families and more lovingly among their neighbours. . . . Always bitter against the Pharisees, she does as the Pharisees do. It is vanity, very likely, which leads these people to use God's name so often, and to devote all to perdition who do not coincide in their peculiar notions. . . . There was as great a sin in His eyes as that of the poor erring woman — it was the sin of pride." At this time Thackeray was asked to a party, and was about to accept, but he heard that Mrs. Trollope would be among the guests. "O, by Jove! I can't come," he exclaimed. "I've just cut up her 'Vicar of Wrexhill' in a review. I think she tells lies."

When "Ernest Maltravers" came into Thackeray's hands, he applied the lash with the utmost vigour. In his zeal for the pure and healthy in literature, he went too far, and showed what might easily have been construed as personal animus against the



THACKERAY, M. V. HIGGINS, AND HENRY REEVE

From a sketch by Doyle, in the British Museum

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author, though it is certain none existed. When he came to forty years he was sorry for what he had written, and asked pardon of the author of "The Caxtons," especially for two performances among the critical and biographical works of the erudite Mr. Yellowplush. Like most young writers, he sought for the blemishes rather than the virtues of books sent to him for review. "I suppose we all begin by being too savage," he said in after days; "I know *one who did*." He grew more gentle as the years passed, and the parodies in *Punch* were certainly written without malice. He laughed at the weaknesses of his victims, but the laugh was kindly. "I hate Juvenal," he wrote to Mr. Hannay, soon after "Esmond" appeared. "I mean, I think him a truculent brute, and I like Horace better than you do, and rate Churchill much lower; and as for Swift, you have n't made me alter my opinion, I admire, or rather admit, his power as much as you do; but I don't admire *that* kind of power so much as I did fifteen years ago, or twenty, shall we say? Love is a higher in-

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tellectual exercise than Hatred; and when you get one or two more of those young ones you write so pleasantly about, you'll come over to the side of the kind wags, I think, rather than the cruel ones."

It was probably while Thackeray was at Cambridge that he laid the foundation of his love for the writers of the eighteenth century. In his Lectures, however, it is of the men and their lives rather than of their books he treated. Yet here and there are critical remarks. Swift he reluctantly admitted to possess a surprising humour, noble, just, and honest satire, and the power of perfect imagery: "the greatest wit of all times," "an immense genius." But it is obvious that of all the writings he preferred the "Journal to Stella," than which, he declared, there was "nothing more manly, more tender, more exquisitely touching." He could not refuse to see Sterne's wit, humour, and pathos, but he disliked his pose: "he used to blubber perpetually in his study, and finding his tears infectious, and that they brought him a great popularity,

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he exercised the lucrative gift of weeping; he utilised it, and cried on every occasion." He was prejudiced against both these writers, and in a letter to a correspondent who had lent him some Sterne MSS., one reason may be discovered: "Of course any man is welcome to believe as he likes *except* a parson; and I can't help looking upon Swift and Sterne as a couple of traitors and renegades . . . with a scornful pity for them in spite of all their genius and their greatness." For Congreve, Wycherley, Farquhar, and their merry and shameless Comic Muse with the libertine heroes and the wanton heroines he had no liking. "A touch of Steele's tenderness is worth all his [Congreve's] finery; a flash of Swift's lightning, a beam of Addison's pure sunshine, and his tawdry playhouse taper is invisible." It was not as the author of "Cato," nor of the poem celebrating the victor of Blenheim that Addison attracted him, but as "a Tatler of small talk and a Spectator of Mankind." "He came in that artificial age, and began to speak with his noble, natural voice. He came, the gentle

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satirist, who hit no unfair blow, the kind judge who castigated only in smiling."

Thackeray loved Steele, whom he declared the founder of sentimental writing in English, and the first author to pay a manly homage to woman. To be natural was a short cut to the heart of the author of "Vanity Fair," and on this ground he paid tribute to Steele and to Goldsmith, with his simple songs of love and beauty. He could not too highly praise "The Deserted Village," "The Vicar of Wakefield," or the two famous plays. Besides Goldsmith, his favourite poets seem to have been Prior and Gay, "Sweet lyric singers," he styled them. Prior, he regarded as the easiest, the richest, the most charmingly humorous of English lyrical poets; while Gay charmed him by the force of simple melody and artless ringing laughter. He singled out the six pastorals called "The Shepherd's Week," and the burlesque poem of "Trivia," and remarked that "these are to poetry what charming little Dresden figures are to sculpture: graceful, minikin, fantastic, with a certain beauty always ac-

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companying them." Pope he unhesitatingly ranked highest among the poets, brightest among the English wits and humourists, and the greatest literary artist of the eighteenth century. Before Fielding and Smollett he bowed low, as a subject before his sovereign. "Humphrey Clinker" he thought the most amusing story written since the goodly art of novel-writing began, and he pronounced "Peregrine Pickle" "excellent for its liveliness and spirit, and wonderful for its atrocious vulgarity." He preferred both these writers to Richardson, though he admitted that "Clarissa" had one of the best managed surprises he had read; but his favourite author was, of course, Fielding, who may be looked upon as the literary god-father of his famous successor. "I have just got two new novels from the library by Mr. Fielding," he wrote to Mrs. Brookfield in 1845; "the one is 'Amelia,' the most delightful portrait of a woman that surely ever was penned; the other is 'Joseph Andrews,' which gives me no particular pleasure, for it is both coarse and careless, and the author makes an absurd



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brag of his twopenny learning, upon which he values himself evidently more than upon the best of his own qualities." He naturally does not think Tom Jones a virtuous character, and he protests against the author's evident liking and admiration for his hero, but "as a picture of manners, the novel of 'Tom Jones' is indeed exquisite; as a work of construction, quite a wonder; the by-play of wisdom; the power of observation; the multiplied felicitous turns and thoughts; the varied character of the great Comic Epic: keep the reader in a perpetual admiration and curiosity." Years before, in the last article he wrote for the *Times*, he had paid tribute to this master of fiction. "What is especially worthy of remark is the masterly manner in which the author paints the good part of those equivocal characters that he brings upon his stage; in 'Amelia' James has his generosity, and his silly wife her good-nature; Matthews her starts of kindness; and Old Bath, in his sister's dressing-gown, cooking possets for her, is really an amiable object, whom we

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like while we laugh at him. A great deal of tenderness and love goes along with this laughter, and it was this mixed feeling that our author liked so to indulge himself, and knew so well how to excite in others. Whenever he has to relate an action of benevolence, honest Fielding kindles as he writes it. Some writers of fiction have been accused of falling in a passion with their bad characters; these our author treats with a philosophic calmness — it is when he comes to the good that he grows enthusiastic; you fancy that you see the tears in his manly eyes, nor does he care to disguise any of the affectionate sympathies of his great heart. This is a defect in art, perhaps, but a very charming one." It was not only Fielding's matter but also his manner that extorted Thackeray's praise. "My English would have been much better if I had read Fielding before I was ten," he once remarked. And because compliments did not flow from him too easily this has been recorded. Another magnificent tribute he paid to a great historian: "To have your name mentioned by Gibbon is like having it

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written on the dome of St. Peter's. Pilgrims from all the world admire and behold it."

For his contemporaries, however, so long as their works were free from vulgarity, affectation, and snobbishness, Thackeray usually contrived to find pleasant words. He wrote an appreciative review of Macaulay's "Essays," when they were first collected in book form. He pronounced "The Song of the Shirt" to be the finest lyric ever written; and regarded Douglas Jerrold as his most important rival on the staff of *Punch*. "Jane Eyre" he mentioned as the master-work of a great genius, while for Tennyson's writings he had the most unbounded admiration. Lytton he praised for the example he set to other authors by being "thoroughly literate;" and many years before he wrote "Codrington" he had praised "Coningsby" in the *Pictorial Times*. Lever pleased him, but he insisted that this author's characteristic was not humour, but sentiment. Many a friendly puff did he give to Dickens, both in the lectures and in articles. He was, however, constrained to admit that his great

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contemporary was not a deep thinker, though "he has a clear and bright-eyed intelligence, which is better than philosophy. I think he is equal to Fielding and Smollett — at any rate to Smollett. He is not such a scholar as Fielding was." "He knows that my books are a protest against his — that if the one set are true, the other must be false. But 'Pickwick' is an exception; it is a capital book. It is like a glass of good English ale." It may confidently be assumed that Thackeray had not much doubt as to which set of books was right.

It cannot be contended that Thackeray was a great critic. Indeed there is no doubt but that, as a rule, he preferred second-rate books of the first-class to the greatest. For instance, while as a matter of course he admitted that Milton was a great poet, he added that "he was such a bore that no one could read him." Whatever one may think of the discernment of a man who says that, it is impossible to doubt his honesty. He was often led away by the character of the author whose works he was criticising. He

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disapproved of Swift and Sterne, and rather grudgingly admitted their qualities; but he gladly praised Pope, whom he loved because of his infirmity, and because of the love the poet bore his mother. His judgments came from the heart rather than the intellect. It was fortunate when these coincided. "St. Charles," he said to Edward FitzGerald, in a third-floor in Charlotte Street, putting one of Charles Lamb's letters to his forehead, remembering his devotion to his half-mad sister. "Humour is wit and love," he said in the lecture on "Charity and Humour," "and the best humour is that which contains most humanity, that which is flavoured throughout with tenderness and kindness." In that short passage is contained the keynote of all his criticism. Above all, it was necessary to be sincere to ensure a favourable verdict from the man whose proud boast it was:—

"Stranger! I have never writ a flattery,  
Nor signed the page that register'd a lie."

## CHAPTER III

### *Thackeray's Ballads*

**A** WELL-KNOWN critic remarked many years ago that if in England you write poetry by profession, however bad that poetry may be, you are a poet; but if you are a merchant, a lawyer, a novelist, anybody, you do not count as a poet, for then the prevailing feeling is: "What business have you as a practical man to make such an ass of yourself?" This statement, the truth of which as regards the general reader cannot be controverted, may account in part for the comparative neglect of Thackeray's ballads; while a second reason is, no doubt, that his poetry has been overshadowed by his novels; and a third cause of neglect may be found in the lamentable fact that light verse does not meet with much encouragement in this country. The aver-

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age Englishman takes poetry only a few degrees less seriously than he takes his Bible; as something only to be approached, metaphorically speaking, after fasting and with prayer. He has the feeling that it is almost irreverent to read light verse: it comes as a shock — as if, when prepared for a deluge, there came only a slight shower of rain. Still, though there has been no Heine in English literature, and, as regards the majority, our poets have lacked the light touch of the French *petit-maitre*, we can boast of several writers of really good occasional and humorous verse in the nineteenth century: Hood, Barham, Calverley, Locker-Lampson, Gilbert, and the always delightful Austin Dobson. None the less, Thackeray's ballads and verses have been accorded so little attention that Mr. Whibley in his recent interesting monograph on that author did not even mention them.

The love of versifying was in Thackeray's blood, and even as a child he wrote rhyming lines under his own drawings of the heroes of the nursery, of young Ned Torre, of Dicky



*little Miss Perkins  
Much loved pickled Gorkins  
And went to the Cup board & stole some  
But they gave her such pain  
She neer ate them again  
She found them so shocking unwholesome*

THACKERAY'S DRAWING FOR THE BALLAD OF "LITTLE  
MISS PERKINS"

From a manuscript in the British Museum

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Snooks and Tom Spry, of dear Suky Jones  
and little Miss Perkins.

As a boy at school Thackeray parodied  
the hyper-sentimental "Violets" of Letitia  
Elizabeth Landon, from which it may be  
deduced that even at a very early age he  
had a keen sense of the ridiculous; and before  
he left the Charterhouse he wrote a Holy-  
day song, a few verses of which may here  
be given as a curiosity:

"Now let us dance and sing  
While Carthusian bells do ring;  
Joy twangs the fiddle-string,  
And Freedom blows the flute.

"Tiddle-dum and Tiddli-di —  
What a joke for you and I —  
Dolce domum, let us cry —  
Charterhouse adieu.

"Purblind Cupid must still drag on  
Some more days ere he can brag on  
Killing game to fill a waggon,  
And thy shooting-jacket too!

"Yet, oh stay! thou beauteous sister  
Who hast caused heartburn and blister  
To that paragon young mister  
Joseph Carne!

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"Queen of Beauty! Star of Harrow!  
Thou hast shot thro' heart and marrow  
And stricken Makepeace with thy arrow  
In the head and brain."

More characteristic are some lines written at about the same time that were handed down orally for two score years before Anthony Trollope committed them to paper.

"In the romantic little town of Highbury  
My father kept a circulating library;  
He followed in his youth that man immortal, who  
Conquered the French on the plains of Waterloo.  
Mamma was an inhabitant of Drogheda,  
Very good she was to darn and to embroider.  
In the famous isle of Jamaica,  
For thirty years I've been a sugar-baker;  
And here I sit, the Muses' 'appy vot'ry,  
A cultivatin' every kind of po'try."

The swing of these lines is undeniable; and the rhymes as awful as anything that even Thackeray ever perpetrated: "Immortal, who" is coupled with "plains of Waterloo," and "Jamaica" with "sugar-baker." But Thackeray never troubled much about correct rhyming. This disregard adds, perhaps, to the amusement in the case of such a humor-

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ous description as "The White Squall," where there are to be found "soaks all" and "fo'ksal," and "Jacob" and "wake up;" but it is more noticeable and less pardonable when, in the most exquisite verse of "Vanitas Vanitatum" he rhymes "splendid" with "penned it."

After Thackeray left school he wrote some stanzas about Lalor Sheil, and a speech which that worthy was prevented (by the police) from delivering, but which, notwithstanding, duly appeared in the morning papers. The verses are poor, but they are memorable as the author's first appearance in print.

### "IRISH MELODY

"(Air: *The Minstrel Boy*)

"Mister Sheil into Kent has gone,  
On Penenden Heath you 'll find him;  
Nor think you that he came alone,  
There 's Doctor Doyle behind him.

" 'Men of Kent,' said the little man,  
'If you hate Emancipation,  
You 're a set of fools.' He then began  
A cut and dry oration.

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"He strove to speak, but the men of Kent  
Began a grievous shouting,  
When out of the waggon the little man went,  
And put a stop to his spouting.

" 'What though these heretics heard me not!'   
Quoth he to his friend Canoncial,  
'My speech is safe in the *Times* I wot,  
And eke in the *Morning Chronicle*.' "

At Cambridge most of Thackeray's contributions to the *Snob* and the *Gownsmen* were in verse, as was much that he wrote for the *National Standard*; but all that can be said of these juvenile productions is that they show a keen sense of fun. In those days Thackeray had not found himself, for even when he abandoned painting he found some difficulty in choosing between the claims of poetry, criticism, and novel-writing. His first book, "Flore et Zéphyr," was a collection of sketches; his earliest contributions to *Fraser's Magazine* included an "Imitation of Béranger," and the free translation of some German ditties; "The Paris Sketch Book" was a medley of political essays, stories, verses, art-criticism, and reviews of



**WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY, ABOUT 1822**  
**From a Bust by Deville in the National Portrait Gallery**



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books; "Comic Tales and Sketches," a collection of stories, most of them illustrated by himself; while the best pages of the little *brochure*, "The Second Funeral of Napoleon," were those devoted to the ballad, "The Chronicle of the Drum." As his literary career progressed, poetry took its place in his life as a relaxation, for, like his sketches, the writing of verses was a labour of love. He wrote many ballads for *Punch* — political skits, love-songs, parodies, what-not — but this did not exhaust his fertility. In private life, too, he was always rhyming. If he wrote to his intimates, if he inscribed his name in a visitors'-book or an autograph album, if he sent a note to a child, or a bunch of flowers to a young girl, or visited an old haunt, he would drop into metre. As a rule the lines flowed without effort from his facile pen, though sometimes he was in trouble. "I don't wonder at poets being selfish," he wrote to Mrs. Brookfield when he was composing the "May-Day Ode." "I have been for five days a poet, and have thought and remembered nothing else than



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myself, and my rhymes, and my measures. If somebody had come to me and said, 'Mrs. Brookfield has just had her arm cut off,' I should have gone on with 'Queen of innumerable Isles, tidumtidy, tidumtidy,' and not stirred from the chair. The children and nobody have n't seen me except at night, and now (though the work is just done) I hardly see the paper before me, so utterly beat, nervous, bilious, and overcome do I feel." Yet, though as a rule he wrote with ease, he was a severe critic of his work, and after publication would sometimes entirely revise the poem. There are two distinct versions of "The King of Brentford;" and no less than three times he materially altered "Lucy's Birthday."

Thackeray wrote in all about one hundred poems. A fifth of this number were based upon political subjects, and of these there is little to say, save that most of them were composed in haste, often with the printer's devil at the door. Their merit consists in a certain humour, but their interest was for the day; they amused the generation for

which they were written, and so achieved their object. Clever they are undoubtedly, but few of them bear the hall-mark of the author's individuality; and, in all probability, the subjects were selected, or at least suggested, by the editor of *Punch*.

The same defects, though in a lesser degree, are noticeable in the "Bow Street Ballads." They also convey in the reading the impression that they were written to order; and not all the fun of Policeman X54's quaint spelling and curious phrasing makes them quite acceptable, although here and there the personality of Thackeray emerges from the motley. Notably is this the case in "Jacob Homnium's Hoss," where he gives rein to his indignation against "Pallis Court," with its monstrous scale of costs: —

"Come down from that tribewn  
 Thou Shameless and Unjust;  
 Thou Swindle, picking pockets in  
 The name of Truth august;  
 Come down, thou hoary Blasphemy,  
 For die thou shalt and must."

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“And go it, Jacob Homnium,  
And ply your iron pen,  
And rise up Sir John Jervis,  
And shut me up that den;  
That sty for fattening lawyers in  
On the bones of honest men.”

The “Lyra Hibernica” are better. The fun is more spontaneous, the humour of a higher class; the quaint rhymes amuse, and the swing of the verses delights. It is not worth while, however, to argue the question of the accuracy of Thackeray’s attempt to present phonetically the Irishman’s pronunciation of the English language. The catalogue of the exhibits of the Great Exhibition is delightful, and the apparent ease of the versification is not excelled even in the wonderful “White Squall.”

“There ’s holy saints  
And window paints,  
By Maydiayval Pugin;  
Alhamborough Jones  
Did paint the tones  
Of yellow and gambouge in.

“There ’s statues bright  
Of marble white,  
Of silver, and of copper;

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And some in zinc,  
And some, I think,  
That is n't over proper.

. . . . .  
"For thim genteels  
Who ride on wheels,  
There 's plenty to indulge 'em;  
There 's droskys snug  
From Paytersbug  
And vayhycles from Bulgium.

"There 's cabs on stands  
And shandthry-danns;  
There 's waggons from New York here;  
There 's Lapland sleighs  
Have crossed the seas,  
And jaunting cyars from Cork here."

Thackeray's favourite poets were Goldsmith and the "sweet lyric singers," Prior, whom he thought the easiest, the richest, the most charmingly humorous of English lyrical poets, and Gay, the force of whose simple melody and artless ringing laughter he appreciated. It is not surprising that Thackeray never essayed the "big bow-wow kind" of poetry. From the first he recognised his limitations; and to the end was content to be bound by them. He might

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have said with Locker-Lampson, "My aim is humble. I used the ordinary metres and rhymes, the simplest language and ideas, I hope flavoured with individuality. I strove not to be obscure, not to be flat, above all, not to be tedious." As, indeed, Thackeray said to the author of the delightful "London Lyrics:" "I have a sixpenny talent (or gift) and so have you; ours is small beer, but, you see, it is the right tap." It is worthy of remark how much in common the verses of these men had. The poems of Locker-Lampson — that author thought Thackeray was almost as humorous as Swift, and sometimes almost as tender as Cowper — often suggest those of the more famous writer. The dainty "St. James's Street" recalls "The Ballad of Bouillabaisse," as "Gertrude's Necklace" conjures up a memory of "Lucy's Birthday." Both were artists to the finger-tips, both had a keen appreciation of humour; but Thackeray, though he could be dainty, was rather more virile and usually less elegant, with a leaning to burlesque.

The sense of parody was, indeed, strongly

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imbued in Thackeray. He wrote "The Willow Tree," and, seeing the opportunity, burlesqued it forthwith. "Larry O'Toole" from *Phil Fogarty* could easily be mistaken for one of the spirited songs with which Lever adorned his brilliant but more or less unreal stories of Ireland.

"You 've all heard of Larry O'Toole,  
Of the beautiful town of Drumgoole;  
He had but one eye,  
To ogle ye by —  
O, murther, but that was a jew'!!  
A fool  
He made of de girls, dis O'Toole.

"T was he was the boy did n't fail,  
That tuck down pataties and mail;  
He never would shrink  
From any sthrong dthrink,  
Was it whisky or Drogheda ale;  
I 'm bail  
This Larry would swallow a pail.

"O many a night, at the bowl,  
With Larry I 've sot cheek by jowl;  
He 's gone to his rest,  
Where there 's dthrink of the best,  
And so let us give his owl sowl  
A howl,  
For 't was he made the noggin to rowl."

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The *libretti* of the 'forties and 'fifties were no more sensible than the majority of the similar compositions to-day, and they offered themselves as a good butt for ridicule. Thackeray started a series of parodies with the Mayfair and the Oriental Love Songs; but when the turn came of the Domestic song, the man's sentiment overcame his intention. Though prefaced by a burlesque prose introduction — omitted in most reprints — there is little or nothing of the parody in the verse. Humour there is in plenty, but it is that tender humour that is not far away from tears; there is loving-kindness in every line; and the picture of the lonely bachelor thinking of the fair young girl whose presence had for a moment relieved the gloom of the dull chambers does not create more mirth than is to be found in a sad smile.

“It was but a moment she sat in this place,  
She 'd a scarf on her neck, and a smile on her face!  
A smile on her face, and a rose in her hair,  
And she sat there, and bloom'd in my cane-bottom'd  
chair.

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"And so I have valued my chair ever since,  
Like the shrine of a saint, or the throne of a prince;  
Sweet Fanny, my patroness sweet, I declare  
The queen of my heart and my cane-bottom'd chair.

"When the candles burn low, and the company's gone,  
In the silence of night as I sit here alone —  
I sit here alone, but we yet are a pair —  
My Fanny I see in my cane-bottom'd chair.

"She comes from the past and revisits my room;  
She looks as she then did, all beauty and bloom,  
So smiling and tender, so fresh and so fair,  
And yonder she sits in my cane-bottom'd chair."

In the same vein of tenderness is the even better-known "Ballad of Bouillabaisse," written in Paris after a visit to the restaurant where the author and his wife and friends had been frequent visitors; and the exquisite "Mahogany Tree," one of the author's favourites, which many a time he sang. A touching incident is narrated concerning these verses. On the Christmas Eve when "Horry" Mayhew brought the sad news of Thackeray's untimely death to the *Punch* staff, who suffered not the loss of the novelist so much as the loss of an old friend, he said, "I'll tell you what we'll do. We'll sing the



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dear old boy's 'Mahogany Tree;' he 'd like it." Accordingly they stood up, and with such memory of the words as each possessed and a catching of the breath here and there, by about all of them, the song was sung.

The most ambitious, as well as the longest, of Thackeray's poems was "The Great Cossack Epic of Demetrius Rigmarolovicz," founded, so the prefatory note informs us, on the legend of St. Sophia, whose statue is said to have walked of its own accord up the river Dnieper to take its station in the Church of Kiew. It is good fooling, and amusing enough, but it does not bear in any marked degree the imprint of Thackeray's individuality. It was followed by "The Chronicle of the Drum," which is on a quite different plane, and is as good as anything Thackeray ever wrote in verse. It is the narrative of a French drummer, whose ancestors for the last four generations had rattled the sticks from the days of Henri of Navarre. In Germany, Flanders, and Holland

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"... my grandsire was ever victorious,  
My grandsire and Monsieur Turenne;"

his father was at Fontenoy and lost his life  
at Quebec; while the story-teller was present  
at Yorktown, helped to drum down the  
Bastille, and fought for the Republic in the  
days of the Terror.

"We had taken the head of King Capet,  
We called for the blood of his wife;  
Undaunted she came to the scaffold,  
And bared her fair neck to the knife.  
As she felt the foul fingers that touched her,  
She shrank but she deigned not to speak,  
She look'd with a royal disdain,  
And died with a blush in her cheek!"

He was in the Napoleonic army and a stout  
partisan of the Emperor. He was at Marengo,  
Jena, Austerlitz, and took part in a hundred  
victorious wars; the Hundred Days found  
him at his post; and he was present at  
Waterloo.

"A curse on those British assassins,  
Who ordered the slaughter of Ney;  
A curse on Sir Hudson, who tortured  
The life of our hero away.

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A curse on all Russians — I hate them —  
On all Prussians and Austrian fry;  
And, oh but I pray we may meet them,  
And fight them again ere I die."

"The Chronicle of the Drum" presents a fine picture of the wild enthusiasm of the French for their Corsican leader and of the deep-seated hatred of

"... those red-coated English,  
Whose bayonets helped our undoing."

The drummer cares nothing for the cause, but everything for the battle; fighting was in his blood, for he loved his country and believed in his general as in his God; yet even when fierce excitement had the better of him, he could spare a thought for the poor woman waiting anxiously for news of her husband, who had marched with the army against Wolfe.

"I think I can see my poor mammy  
With me in her hand as she waits,  
And our regiment, slowly retreating,  
Pours back through the citadel gates.  
Dear Mammy! she looks in their faces,  
And asks if her husband has come? —  
He is lying all cold on the glacis,  
And will never more beat on the drum."

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This splendid martial poem contains much satirical humour and just the amount of underlying pathos that adds to the beauty; and it has many of the qualities that later were to combine in the making of the wonderful, ironical "Barry Lyndon."

In his verses as in his prose, but more concisely in the former, Thackeray, as the latter-day "sad and splendid, the weary King Ecclesiast," cried his sermon. He had no new lesson to teach: the old tale was good enough for him to repeat. He would have women good and pure, and men brave and true; he would have parents respect their children, as he would have the young reverence their elders. Success is but little, he preached, for the race is not always to the swift, and the great may be overthrown and the lackey exalted; but none the less,

"... if you fail, or if you rise,  
Be each, pray God, a gentleman."

"It is easy enough to knock off that nonsense about Policeman X," Thackeray said; "but to write a good occasional verse is a rare intellectual feat." Yet this, too, he

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accomplished. He possessed the wit and fancy, the humour and tenderness, the refinement, without all of which qualities "the real thing" cannot be produced. Nor was the lyrical strain absent from his composition. His verse is easy and possesses the essential merit of apparent spontaneity. He was almost invariably humorous; yet there was always something more than mere fun. Frequently he was satirical, occasionally he was indignant; sometimes, as in "The End of the Play" and "Vanitas Vanitatum," he was didactic; usually he was tender and pathetic. He could be gay; he could sprinkle his verses with playful or ironic humour; and upon all his best work his personality is impressed; the man's great heart is there for all to see who care to look. Most of his ballads are good; all are readable, and many are possessed of distinction. As has been said, his rhymes were often appalling, and his metre not always perfect; but his language was as simple and direct as in his prose writings. If he was not underrating his talent when he spoke of it as small beer, he certainly



WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY  
From a water-color drawing by D. Dighton  
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was not guilty of an error of judgment when he declared it was the right tap. No "Lyra Elegantiarum" is complete without the insertion of "The Mahogany Tree," "The Ballad of Bouillabaisse," and "Peg of Limavaddy;" and no collection of humorous verse may omit "The Chronicle of the Drum." These alone give him a place of importance among the lighter poets; and if at present his eminence as a novelist has thrown his poems into shadow, as time passes his ballads will be more widely read, and his reputation as a poet will be considerably enhanced.

It was thought when Mr. M. H. Spielmann discovered in *Punch* some score of hitherto unidentified ballads that the last discovery of verses by Thackeray had been made. However, there was another surprise in store. In the *Monthly Review* for October, 1904, an article by the late Rev. Whitwell Elwin on "Thackeray in search of a Profession," disclosed the fact that Thackeray had contributed to the *Foreign Quarterly Review*, April, 1843, a review of Herwegh's



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earlier poems headed: "Georg Herwegh. Gedichte eines Lebendigen, mit einer Dedication an den Verstorbenen" ("Poems of a Living Man, with a Dedication to the Dead"), 1841-1842.

Thackeray, however, had done more than criticise the poems. He had translated some of them. It cannot be contended that these are equal to his "Imitations of Béranger" for certainly Thackeray had more in common with that poet. His rendering of "Il était un roi d'Yvetot" retains much of the humour of the original; while "The Garret," the English version of "Le Grenier," reads like one of the translator's own ballads.

"Let us begone — the place is sad and strange —  
How far, far off, those happy times appear;  
All that I have to live I'd gladly change  
For one such month as I have wasted here —  
To draw long dreams of beauty, love, and power,  
From founts of hope that never will outrun,  
And drink all life's quintessence in an hour,  
Give me the days when I was twenty-one!"

Herein may be detected an influence that was at work when the time came to compose "The Mahogany Tree" and "The

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Ballad of Bouillabaisse." Thackeray translated verses from Horace, and these charm by their humour; and also from Chamisso, De la Motte Fouqué, and Uhland. With the latter he was particularly happy, for his rendering of "Der König auf dem Turme" was one of the best things he ever did. He must have taken much trouble to produce these verses, for nothing of the simple, sad beauty of this, one of the best of Uhland's poems, is lost in the translation.

"The cold grey hills they bind me around,  
The darksome valleys lie sleeping below,  
But the winds, as they pass o'er all this ground,  
Bring me never a sound of woe!

"Oh! for all I have suffered and striven,  
Care has embittered my cup and my feast;  
But here is the night and the dark blue heaven,  
And my soul shall be at rest.

"O golden legends writ in the skies!  
I turn towards you with longing soul,  
And list to the awful harmonies  
Of the Spheres as on they roll."

Herwegh is a poet little known in this country, and, indeed, not now greatly honoured in his own land. As a lad he showed

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considerable talent. He published a very acceptable translation of some of Lamartine's writings; and later became the assistant of Lewald, the editor of a not very important literary journal, *Europe*. At that time conscription was, of course, already in full swing in Germany; and, too poor to buy a substitute, Herwegh was impressed. The life in barracks was unendurable to the sensitive young man of letters. Recruits were coupled to prevent desertion, and his companion was a rough, coarse peasant. He wrote to Lewald and told him he would rather die than serve the remainder of his time. Thus spurred, the editor used his influence, and succeeded in obtaining for his *protégé* unlimited leave of absence. All would have been well, therefore, but that at a public ball Herwegh quarrelled with an officer, and there was to be a duel until his antagonist discovered that Herwegh was a private in his regiment, when, as an officer cannot meet a private, the encounter was abandoned; but the poet's leave of absence was at once withdrawn.

Herwegh could not bring himself to return to the army; and, instead, hastened over the Swiss frontier; but again influence must have been brought to bear on the military authorities, for his desertion was condoned, and soon he returned and went to Berlin. There he became the lion of the season. The King granted him an interview; he was *fêted* everywhere; and a wealthy woman married him. It was shortly after this that "Gedichte eines Lebendigen" was published. With his later career we have here no concern. Those who are not familiar with Herwegh's works may be interested in an excerpt from Thackeray's criticism: "Herwegh has fancy, wit, and strong words at command. He has a keen eye for cant, too, at times, and shows himself to be a pretty sharp and clear-headed critic of art. But it is absurd to place this young man forward as a master. His poetry is a convulsion, not an effort of strength; he does not sing, but he roars; his dislike amounts to fury; and . . . in many instances his hatred and heroism are quite factitious, and his

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enthusiasm has a very calculating look with it."

The first piece translated is "Das Lied vom Hasse" ("The Song of Hatred").

"Brave soldier, kiss the trusty wife,  
And draw the trusty blade!  
Then turn ye to the reddening East,  
In freedom's cause arrayed;  
Till death shall part the blade and hand,  
They may not separate:  
We 've practised loving long enough,  
And come at length to hate!

"To right us and to rescue us  
Hath Love essayed in vain;  
O Hate! proclaim thy judgment-day  
And break our bonds in twain.  
As long as ever tyrants last  
Our task shall not abate:  
We 've practised loving long enough,  
And come at length to hate!

"Henceforth let every heart that beats  
With hate alone be beating —  
Look round! what piles of rotten sticks  
Will keep the flame a-heating —  
As many as are free and dare  
From street to street go say 't:  
We 've practised loving long enough,  
And come at length to hate!

"Fight tyranny, while tyranny  
 The trampled earth above is;  
 And holier will our hatred be,  
 Far holier than our love is.  
 Till death shall part the blade and hand,  
 They may not separate:  
 We 've practised loving long enough,  
 And come at length to hate!"

As Thackeray was the first to confess, much of the spirit of this rude, hearty song has evaporated and, to give one example of this, the last two lines in the English version are a poor exchange for the original "Wir haben lang genug geliebt und wollen endlich hassen."

The second poem, "Zuruf" ("Appeal"), is one in which martyrdom, republicanism, destruction of priesthood, and other favourite revolutionary doctrines of the writer are enunciated.

"Behold, when the red sun appears,  
 He shineth as bright in his station,  
 As he shone in the day of creation,  
 Ere he looked on the woes of long years.

"Young hearts, be ye steady and bold,  
 Confront ye the tempest undaunted,  
 For He who the spirit has granted  
 Is with us to-day as of old.

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"For the last of all kings, make ye way,  
A million glad voices proclaim his  
Avatar, and FREEDOM his name is,  
And boundless and endless his sway.<sup>1</sup>

. . . . .

"And not only Heaven as of yore,  
But earth shall be pure and divine,  
One priesthood man's sanctified line,  
And laymen among us no more!

"Make way for our Saviour and Lord;  
It is not with hymns that we greet him,  
It is not with palms that we meet him,  
But he comes with the clang of the sword.

"Then, Bards, lay aside for the blade,  
The harp and its idle diversions:  
Thermopylae waits for our Persians,  
And many a grave in the shade!"

<sup>1</sup> The difficulty of the translation of this poem has resulted in a somewhat free rendering. A verse that should be inserted between the third and fourth was not translated by Thackeray, who, printing it in German, gives a footnote saying it was quite beyond his powers, and that he had shown it to a German friend, who was at a loss regarding the meaning of the last line.

"Nimmer schwingt in unsrem Haus  
Der Kosake seine Knüte  
Uns're Deutsche Zauberruthe  
Schlägt noch manchen goldnen Frühling aus."

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The following was obviously dictated by Herwegh's keen sense of the importance of his calling: —

“Wore I a soldier's weapon on my thigh,  
Drove I a rustic's plough upon the lea,  
At early eve I'd fling my labours by,  
And drink my homely cup and so be free.

“Such calm for spirits like mine may never be,  
My soul hath restless pinions and will fly,  
Still eager soaring higher and more high,  
And the kind evening brings no rest for me.

“We raise not barriers to the Heavenly thus,  
*Thought* tracks us on the wide world's busy ways,  
It watches when we sleep — there is no place,  
To shelter from that constant genius!  
Its lightnings round about us ever blaze,  
And even in love's arms it reaches us.”

Then comes advice to a lady who was tempted to publish her verses, of which, apparently, the poet had not a high opinion:—

“On humble knees of silent nights,  
No more my lady prays;  
But now in glory she delights,  
And pines to wear the bays.



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The gentle secret of her heart  
She'd tell to idle ears,  
And fain would carry to the mart  
The treasure of her tears!

"When there are roses freshly blown  
That forehead to adorn,  
Why ask the Poet's martyr-crown, —  
The bitter wreath of thorn?  
That lip which all so ruddy is,  
With freshest roses vying,  
Believe me, sweet, was made to kiss,  
Not formed for prophesying.

"Remain, my nightingale, remain,  
And warble in your shade!  
The heights of glory were in vain,  
By wings like yours essayed;  
And while at Glory's shrine the Priest  
A hecatomb must proffer,  
There's Love — oh, Love will take the least  
Small mite the heart can offer."

It is only fair to the author to give the original of the last two lines, which are indeed a very feeble rendering of "O Liebe! — ist ein Schärfflein auch willkommen."

"Comrade, why the song so joyous — why the goblet  
in your hand?  
While in sackcloth and in ashes yonder weeps our  
Fatherland.

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"Still the bells and bed the roses — with girls on German strand;  
For deserted by her bridegroom, yonder sits our Fatherland.

"Wherefore strive for crowns, ye princes? — quit your state, your jewels grand,  
See where at your palace portal, shivering sits our Fatherland.

"Idle priestlings, what avails us — prayer and pulpit, cowl and band?  
Trodden in the dust and groaning, yonder lies our Fatherland.

"Counting out his red round rubles, yon sits Dives smiling bland —  
Reckoning his poor wounds and sores, Lazarus, our Fatherland.

"Wo, ye poor! for priceless jewels lie before ye in the sand,  
Even my tears, my best, my brightest! lie there, wept for Fatherland.

"But, O poet, cease thy descant — 't is not thine as judge to stand,  
Silence now — the swan hath sung his death-song for our Fatherland."

The "Protest," which follows, is a satire upon the pompous ballad of Becker that was so popular in Germany at a time when the

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feeling of the nation was excited against  
France.

“As long as I’m a Protestant,  
I’m bounden to protest,  
Come every German musicant  
And fiddle me his best.  
You’re singing of ‘the Free old Rhine,’  
But I say no, good comrades mine,  
The Rhine could be  
Greatly more free,  
And that I do protest.

“I scarce had got my christening o’er,  
Or was in breeches drest,  
But I began to shout and roar,  
And mightily protest.  
And since that time I’ve never stopt,  
My protestations never dropped;  
And blessed be they  
Who every way  
And everywhere protest.

“There’s one thing certain in my creed,  
And schism is all the rest,  
That who’s a Protestant indeed,  
For ever must protest,  
What is the River Rhine to me?  
For from its source unto the sea  
Men are not free,  
Whate’er they be,  
And that I do protest.

## Thackeray's Ballads

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"As every man in reason grants,  
    What always was confest,  
As long as we are Protestants,  
    We sternly must protest.  
And when they sing 'the Free old Rhine,'  
Answer them, 'No, good comrades mine,  
    The Rhine could be  
    Greatly more free,  
And that you shall protest.' "

## CHAPTER IV

### *Thackeray and the Newgate School of Fiction*

**I**N the thirties of the last century arose the Newgate School of Fiction, which made heroes of highwaymen and other offenders, and so created a false sympathy for the vicious and criminal. The ingenious Bulwer-Lytton it was who led the way and scored a great success with "Eugene Aram." Never before in an English novel had a murderer been portrayed as an earnest student of philosophy, with grave mien, gentle manners, and noble heart; never before had there been depicted a murderer — a murderer who murdered for money, to boot — whose character was so endearing and so sympathetic as to enslave most of those who read about him. The book was favourably received in most quarters, but here and there a dissentient voice was heard, and in *Fraser's Magazine* for August and September, 1832,

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a tremendous onslaught, in the form of a story called "Elizabeth Brownrigge" (which dealt with the murderess of that name), was made upon the author of "Eugene Aram," to whom it was dedicated. "I am inclined to regard you as an original discoverer in the world of literary enterprise and to reverence you as the father of a new '*lusus naturae* school,'" so ran a passage in the dedication of the satire. "There is no other title by which your manner could be so aptly designated. I am told, for instance, that in a former work, having to paint an adulterer, you described him as belonging to the class of country curates, among whom, perhaps, such a criminal is not met with once in a hundred years; while, on the contrary, being in search of a tender-hearted, generous, sentimental, high-minded hero of romance, you turned to the pages of the 'Newgate Calendar,' and looked for him in the list of men who have cut throats for money, among whom a person in possession of such qualities could not have been met with at all. Wanting a shrewd, selfish,

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worldly, calculating valet, you describe him as an old soldier, though he bears not a single trait of the character which might have been moulded by a long course of military service, but, on the contrary, is marked by all the distinguishing features of a bankrupt attorney or a lame duck from the Stock Exchange. Having to paint a cat, you endow her with the idiosyncrasies of a dog." There is one other passage which must also be quoted: "It is extraordinary that, as you had commenced a tragedy under the title of 'Eugene Aram,' I had already sketched a burletta with the title of 'Elizabeth Brownrigge.' I had, indeed, in my dramatic piece, been guilty of an egregious and unpardonable error; I had attempted to excite the sympathies of the audience in favour of the murdered apprentices, but your novel has disabused me of so vulgar a prejudice, and in my present version of her case, all the interest of the reader and all the pathetic powers of the author will be engaged on the side of the murderess." At the end of the satire, there is an "Advertise-

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ment," which runs: "The author of the foregoing Tale begs leave to state that he is prepared to treat with any liberal and enterprising publisher, who may be inclined to embark in the speculation, for a series of novels, each in 3 vols. 8vo, under the title of 'Tales of the Old Bailey, or Romances of Tyburn Tree;' in which the whole 'Newgate Calendar' shall be travestied, after the manner of 'Eugene Aram.' Letters (post-paid) addressed to X. Y. Z., 215, Regent Street [the offices of *Fraser's Magazine*], will receive immediate attention."

"Elizabeth Brownrigge" was published anonymously, and if it attracted any attention at the time, it certainly did not attract sufficient to make people desirous to discover the author. It may at the time of its publication have been credited to this writer or to that, but it was not (so far as is known) until a month or two after Thackeray's death that Dr. John Brown in an article on the novelist in the *North British Review* (February, 1864) attributed it to him — on what evidence he does not state, though he



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may well have had the information from the author. "Elizabeth Brownrigge" is particularly interesting because, whether Thackeray did or did not write the story, there can be no question but that it was directly responsible for "Catherine," which had the same object as the earlier story. "'Elizabeth Brownrigge' ought to be Thackeray's," Swinburne wrote to Mr. Richard Herne Shepherd in 1880, "for if it is not, he stole the idea, and to some extent the style, of his parodies on novels of criminal life, from this first sketch of the kind."

A couple of years after "Eugene Aram" was published, William Harrison Ainsworth came to the fore as an exponent of the Newgate School of Fiction. Lytton had taken a murderer for his hero; Ainsworth selected a highwayman. Dick Turpin was his *jeune premier* in "Rookwood," and that sorry young scoundrel Jack Sheppard gave his name to, and the *raison d'être* for, another book. These novels, too, caught the public taste, and were widely read and praised highly even by those who should have known



AUTHOR OF "ROOKWOOD"  
From a drawing by Daniel Maclise

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better. Ainsworth's recent biographer, Mr. S. M. Ellis, for one, can see no objection to the "Jack Sheppard" class of novel. "The outcry against Ainsworth for having chosen a robber for a hero cannot seriously be justified," he has written. "If it is inherently immoral to take a criminal for literary purposes and make him picturesque and interesting, then the greatest writers will have to stand in the same pillory as the author of 'Jack Sheppard.' The principal characters of Shakespeare's tragedies of 'Hamlet,' of 'Macbeth' of 'Othello,' — are but murderers; Falstaff is a robber and worse. Scott must answer for 'Rob Roy;' Fielding for 'Jonathan Wild;' Gay for 'The Beggars' Opera;' Schiller for 'The Robbers;' Hood for his magnificent 'Eugene Aram;' Dumas for his 'Celebrated Crimes,' and so on through literature of all times and countries. This brilliant band of criminals, illuminated and idealised by literary limelight, cannot deny the consanguineous claims of poor, abused, 'Jack Sheppard.'"

It would indeed be a waste of time to dwell

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upon the fallacies of this argument; but it may be remarked that Ainsworth's enthusiastic defender has strangely misread "Jonathan Wild," since he can mention that brilliant satire in connection with the Newgate School of Fiction; he might as well have added to the list "Catherine." Mr. Ellis insists that the Newgate novels of Ainsworth are moral because the villains end on the gallows. He ignores the fact that, while they do go to the gallows, they go as heroes, not as malefactors; but he inadvertently admits that Ainsworth "threw a romantic glamour over his merry sinners," and so, in a line, he gives away the case for which he has fought so strenuously in many pages.

Forster and Thackeray now led the attack against the Newgate School of Fiction. "Bad as we think the morals, we think the puffs even more dangerous," Forster wrote in the *Examiner*. "Public morality and public decency have rarely been more endangered than by the trumpeted exploits of 'Jack Sheppard.'"

In "Catherine," Thackeray had some-

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thing to say of one of Dickens's books. "No one," he wrote, "has read that remarkable tale of 'Oliver Twist' without being interested in poor Nancy and her murderer; and especially amused and tickled by the gambols of the Artful Dodger and his companions. The power of the writer is so amazing, that the reader at once becomes his captive, and must follow him wherever he leads; and to what are we led? Breathless to watch all the crimes of Fagin, tenderly to deplore the errors of Nancy, to have for Bill Sikes a kind of pity and admiration, and an absolute love for the society of the Dodger. . . . A most agreeable set of rascals indeed, who have their virtues, too, but not good company for any man. We had better pass them by in decent silence; for, as no writer can or dare tell the *whole* truth concerning them, and faithfully explain their vices, there is no need to give *ex-parte* statements of their virtue." It was, however, mainly against "Rookwood" and "Jack Sheppard" (the earlier part of which had appeared in *Bent-*

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*ley's Miscellany*) that Thackeray tilted in "Catherine," which purported to be written by "Ikey Solomons, Esq., jr." — Ikey Solomons having been a notorious "fence" — and was dated from Horsemonger Lane, a particularly unsavoury district. Thackeray stated again that the writers of the Newgate School of Fiction did not dare to paint their heroes as the scoundrels he knew them to be. "In Freeny's (the highwayman) life," Thackeray wrote subsequently in "The Irish Sketch Book" (ch. XV), "one man may see the evil of drinking, another the harm of horse-racing, another the danger attendant on early marriage, a fourth the exceeding inconvenience of the heroic highwayman's life — which a certain Ainsworth in company with a certain Cruikshank, have represented as so poetic and brilliant, so prodigal of delightful adventure, so adorned with champagne, gold lace, and brocade." Thackeray had no objection to a novelist taking a villain for his principal character; he himself selected Barry Lyndon for one such post of honour, but he insisted that it was

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bad art, as well as dishonesty and immorality, to confuse virtue and vice. "Vice," he wrote in his paper on the author of "Tom Jones," "is never to be mistaken for virtue in Fielding's honest downright books; it goes by its name, and invariably gets its punishment. See the consequences of honesty! Many a squeamish lady of our time would fling down one of these romances with horror, but would go through every page of Mr. Ainsworth's 'Jack Sheppard' with perfect comfort to herself. Ainsworth dared not paint his hero as the scoundrel he knew him to be; he must keep his brutalities in the background, else the public morals will be outraged, and so he produces a book quite absurd and unreal, and infinitely more immoral than anything Fielding ever wrote. 'Jack Sheppard' is immoral actually because it is decorous. The Spartans, who used to show drunken slaves to their children, took care, no doubt, that the slaves should be really and truly drunk. Sham drunkenness, which never passed the limits of propriety, but only went so far as to be amusing, would



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be rather an object to excite youth to intoxication than to deter him from it, and some late novels have always struck us in the same light."

Thackeray decided that his castigation of these immoral novels should take the form of a story in which all the principal characters were villains, portrayed, not indeed so vile as were the prototypes, for that was impossible to do in the page of a magazine, but so nearly to life as the public could be expected to tolerate. With this object in view he searched the "Newgate Calendar," and found therein the very heroine for such a story as he contemplated, — Mrs. Catherine Hayes, whose history has been admirably summarised in the "Dictionary of National Biography" by Mr. Alsager Vian. Catherine Hall was her maiden name, and she was born near Birmingham in 1690. At a very early age she was led into evil courses. At the age of sixteen she married a carpenter, John Hayes, by whom (it is to be hoped) she had twelve children. Some years after the marriage, they went to London, where



WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY IN 1835

From the drawing by Daniel Maclise

*By permission of Major William H. Lambart*



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near Tyburn they set up a small shop and supplemented their income from this source by letting lodgings. With two of the lodgers, Wood and Billings, she became criminally intimate, and the three of them one night in March, 1726, made John Hayes drunk and killed him; cutting up the body, and disposing of the different parts in different places. One portion of the remains was discovered, and then another, and eventually Mrs. Hayes and Billings were arrested for murder, and presently Wood was captured and confessed. Mrs. Hayes pleaded not guilty, but was convicted of petty treason and sentenced to be burnt alive. The men were sentenced to be hanged. Wood died in Newgate the day before the execution, and Mrs. Hayes made an abortive attempt to poison herself. No story could be more sordid or unpleasant, and Thackeray deliberately mitigated the horrors as little as possible. "Catherine" appeared in *Fraser's Magazine* from May, 1839, to February, 1840, and the author was heartily pleased when the conclusion was reached. "Having

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finished our delectable meal," he wrote, "it behoves us to say a word or two by way of grace at its conclusion, and to be heartily thankful that it is over. It has been the writer's object carefully to exclude from his drama (except in two very insignificant instances — mere walking gentlemen parts) any characters but those of scoundrels of the very highest degree. That he has not altogether failed in the object he had in view, is evident from some newspaper critiques which he has had the good fortune to see; and which abuse the tale of 'Catherine' as one of the dullest, most vulgar, and immoral works extant. It is highly gratifying to the author to find that such opinions are abroad, as they convince him that the taste for Newgate literature is on the wane; and that when the public critic has right down undisguised immorality set before him, the lowest creature is shocked at it, as he should be, and can declare his indignation in good round terms of abuse. The characters of the tale *are* immoral, and no doubt of it; but the writer humbly hopes the end

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is not so. The public was, in our notion, dosed and poisoned by the prevailing style of literary practice, and it was necessary to administer some medicine that would produce a wholesome nausea, and afterwards bring about a more healthy habit. And, thank Heaven, this effect *has* been produced in very many instances, and the 'Catherine' cathartic has acted most efficaciously. The author has been pleased at the disgust which his work has excited, and has watched with benevolent carefulness the wry faces that have been made by many of the patients who have swallowed the dose."

"Be it granted," so the book concludes, "that Solomons *is* dull, but don't attack his morality; he humbly submits that, in his poem, no man shall mistake virtue for vice, no man shall allow a single sentiment of pity or admiration to enter his bosom for any character of the piece; it being, from beginning to end, a scene of unmixed rascality performed by people who never deviate into good feeling. And although he doth not pretend to equal the great modern authors

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whom he hath mentioned, in wit or descriptive power; yet, in the point of moral, he meekly believes that he has been their superior; feeling the greatest disgust for the characters he describes, and using his humble endeavour to cause the public also to hate them."

"It is a disgusting subject and no mistake," Thackeray wrote to his mother. "It was a mistake all through. It was not made disgusting enough — that was the fact, and the triumph of it would have been to make readers so horribly horrified as to cause them to give up or rather throw up the book and all its kind; whereas you see the author had a sneaking kindness for his heroine, and did not like to make her quite worthless." Yet, in spite of the author's lament, "Catherine" achieved its object, for Ainsworth gave way before the attack, and made no further contribution to the Newgate School of Fiction.

## CHAPTER V

### *Thackeray as Artist*

WHEN, in July, 1833, Thackeray was acting as Paris correspondent of the *National Standard and Journal of Literature, Science, Music, Theatricals, and the Fine Arts*, a little paper first edited and subsequently purchased by him, he wrote to his mother: "I have been thinking very seriously of turning artist. I can draw better than I can do anything else, and certainly I should like it better than any other occupation, as why should n't I?" The last sentence seems to hint that some objections had been raised to his following this profession, and, indeed, in the earlier years of the last century parents and guardians did not allow those young men who were under their control to embark upon such a Bohemian career as that of art. Perhaps in this case no objections were raised, perhaps they

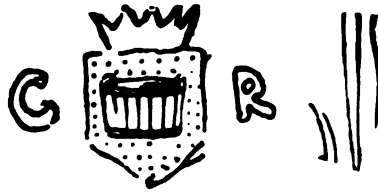


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were raised and overruled by an enthusiastic young man. Be this as it may, early in the following year, when the *National Standard* came to an untimely end, its editor remained in Paris to devote himself in all seriousness to the study of Art.

Even as a child Thackeray was fond of drawing, and at a very early age he used his pencil and his paint box. He ornamented the leaves of his Charterhouse school-books with caricatures of his masters and his schoolfellows, and embellished with illustrations his copies of "Don Quixote," "The Castle of Otranto" (in which there is an intensely amusing sketch of Manfred holding the door against Matilda), "Robinson Crusoe," "Joseph Andrews," and many other stories.<sup>1</sup> His skill was appreciated even in these early days, and many years later, in a "Roundabout Paper," he referred

<sup>1</sup> Most of these volumes have found their way to the auction room, where they fetched very high prices. Ainsworth's Latin Dictionary, which Thackeray bought second-hand for a shilling, sold at his death for nearly five pounds, and recently changed hands at twenty-four pounds!



**KING GLUMPUS.**

THACKERAY'S DRAWING FOR "KING GLUMPUS"

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to these youthful efforts, "O Scottish Chiefs, did n't we weep over you! O Mysteries of Udolpho, did n't I and Briggs (Minor) draw pictures out of you! Efforts feeble indeed, but still giving pleasure to ourselves and our friends. 'I say, old boy, draw us Vivaldi tortured in the Inquisition,' or 'Draw us Don Quixote and the Windmills,' amateurs would say to boys who had a love of drawing." Many of the drawings done at school have been preserved, and a number were reproduced in the interesting volume entitled "Thackerayana."

At Cambridge Thackeray amused himself in a similar manner, and, *inter alia*, sketched some droll pictures descriptive of life at the University — "The Mathematics Lecturer," "The Classman," "The Plodder," "The Grinder," etc.; and, by far the best, "First Term," showing a student hard at work, and "Second Term," showing the same student lying in the well of a sofa, the back of which is turned to the spectator, who can see only the cigar and the boots of the idler. These must not be confused with

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two other drawings, bearing the same titles, and similar in subject, but not nearly so amusing, reprinted in the slim tome of "Etchings done while at Cambridge," published by Sotheran in 1878. Of this latter collection those most worthy of mention are the plates "Departure for Cambridge" and "Arrival from Cambridge." These were companion pictures, a favourite form indulged in by the artist, who, in "Pendennis," gave "Pen's Staircase — 1, A Little Dinner;" and "Pen's Staircase — 2, A Few Little Bills," which were quite in the style of his early vein.

Soon after leaving Cambridge, Thackeray went abroad, and he has recorded how it was his delight in those days to make caricatures for children, and how, when he revisited Weimar more than twenty years later, he was touched to find they were remembered, and that several had been kept. Of the few that have been reprinted the best are a set of "Legal Definitions (by One who may be called to the Bar)."

In the autumn of 1831 Thackeray was

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entered as a student at the Middle Temple, where he read with the special pleader and conveyancer, Taprell, and rented chambers at No. 1, Hare Court. He never took kindly to the study of law, as readers of "Pendennis" are well aware, and when he came of age, in July, 1832, he gave up all pretence of reading for the Bar. Then began his connection with the *National Standard*, in which paper his first sketches appeared. They were fourteen in number, and included an illustration to "The Devil's Wager" (reprinted in "The Paris Sketch-Book"), and caricatures of Louis Philippe, Braham, Alfred Bunn, N. M. Rothschild, Sir Peter Laurie, and Crockford. The drawings were rough, however, and do not show the promise of some of his earlier work.

It was about this time that he wrote and illustrated half-a-dozen sets of nursery rhymes, entitled "Simple Melodies," and the very amusing series of sketches depicting scenes from an imaginary melodrama, entitled "The Bandit's Revenge, or, The Fatal Sword." A less elaborate version of "The

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Bandit's Revenge," entitled "Vivaldi," appeared in the "Biographical" edition of Thackeray's Works.

At first Thackeray made his sketches for the amusement of his friends. "If I had only kept the drawings from his pen which used to be chucked about as though they were nothing!" more than one person exclaimed to Anthony Trollope, who has told us of an album of drawings and letters which, in the course of twenty years, from 1829 to 1849, were sent by Thackeray to his life-long friend, Edward FitzGerald, the translator of Omar. As time passed, however, he was persuaded that his work might have some pecuniary value, and eventually he sought a market for his caricatures. He did find a Mr. Gibbs, who offered to dispose of them for him, but whether he was able to do so or not is unrecorded in the history of the house of Thackeray.

When Thackeray settled at Paris, after the failure of the *National Standard*, he spent most of his days in the studios, at first studying with Brine, a well-known artist,



REDUCED FACSIMILE OF THE TITLE PAGE TO THE  
 FIRST EDITION OF "FLORE ET ZEPHYR"

From the copy owned by Major William H. Lambert





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and afterwards with Gros, a favourite pupil of the great David. What his masters thought is not known, but he reported himself satisfied with his progress, and thought, if he worked hard, in a year he might produce something at which it would be worth while to look; but, he wrote naïvely to his mother, it would require at least that time to gain any readiness with his brush! He devoted many hours to the picture-galleries, where now and then he copied a picture — a Watteau or a Lucas van Leyden (“a better man, I think, than Albert Dürer, and mayhap as great a composer as Raphael himself”). Edinburgh Reviewer Abraham Hayward, writing of “Vanity Fair” in January, 1848, well remembered “ten or twelve years ago finding him day after day engaged in copying pictures in the Louvre, in order to qualify himself for his intended profession.”

In 1836 Thackeray published “Flore et Zéphyr. Ballet Mythologique Dédié à Flore par Théophile Wagstaffe,” being a series of eight drawings with a pictorial wrapper. It

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is a delightfully amusing production, original in conception, unconventional in design, and clearly showing how thoroughly developed, even at that date, was Thackeray's sense of humour.

Soon after Thackeray came to London on business connected with the starting of the *Constitutional (and Public Ledger)*, a paper in which his stepfather and himself were deeply interested as part-proprietors. During this visit, Seymour, the designer of "Pickwick" committed suicide. It came to Thackeray's ears that the designs of the artist who took his place did not satisfy Dickens, and he made the now historic offer to illustrate the book. The offer was refused, and Thackeray always insisted on referring to it as "Mr. Pickwick's lucky escape." "Had it not been for the direct act of my friend who has just sat down, I should most likely never have been included in the toast which you have been pleased to drink; and I should have tried to be, not a writer, but a painter or designer of pictures," he said years later when, at a Royal Acad-

emy dinner, he responded to the toast of Literature with which his name and Dickens's were associated. "That was the object of my early ambition; and I can remember when Mr. Dickens was a very young man, and had commenced delighting the world with some charming humorous works, of which I cannot mention the name, but which were coloured light green, and came out once a month, that this young man wanted an artist to illustrate his writings; and I recollect walking up to his chambers in Furnival's Inn with two or three drawings in my hand, which, strange to say, he did not find suitable. But for the unfortunate blight which came over my artistical existence, it would have been my pride and pleasure to have endeavoured one day to find a place on these walls for one of my performances. This disappointment caused me to direct my attention to a different walk of art, and now I can only hope to be 'translated' on these walls, as I have been, thanks to my talented friend, Mr. Egg."

The *Constitutional* was a failure, and it

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went under in the summer of 1838, carrying with it Thackeray's patrimony, or all that remained after losses at cards, and the failure of an Indian bank in which a portion of it had been invested. The young man had just married, and it was important that money should be forthcoming. Literary work was offered in abundance and perforce accepted. Thereupon he abandoned the hope of becoming a serious painter, though to the end of his days he never ceased to practise the lighter vein of art. Indeed, from the time when he was a slim young man, covering with sketches every scrap of paper lying about, drawing was his principal amusement. All his life he preferred the pencil to the pen, and when he found the strain of literary composition irksome, he would turn with pleasure and a sense of relief to the drawing-board. "The sketches as they are given here are scarcely to be counted work," Lady Ritchie wrote in the preface to the volume of drawings published posthumously under the title of "The Orphan of Pimlico." "The hours which he spent upon his drawing-



REDUCED FACSIMILE OF THE TITLE PAGE TO THE  
FIRST EDITION OF "COMIC TALES AND SKETCHES"

From the copy owned by Major William H. Lambert

See page 110

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blocks and sketch-books brought no fatigue or weariness. They were of endless interest and amusement to him, and rested him when he was tired. It was only when he came to etch upon steel or to draw for the engraver upon wood that he complained of effort and want of ease, and we used often to wish that his drawings could be given as they were first made, without the various transmigrations of wood and steel, and engraver's toil and printer's ink." But he was undoubtedly wise to give up painting. Even Henry Reeve, who was inclined to judge sympathetically, declared that he would willingly set him to copy a picture of Raphael, as far, at least, as the drawing went, but that the young artist, on his own confession, did not seem likely to get into a system of massive colouring.

An interesting problem not yet solved is what were Thackeray's earliest writings in *Fraser's Magazine*. A question equally interesting, and one which no one has yet attempted to answer, is what were his earliest drawings in that periodical. There



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is a note penned by an anonymous scribbler in the copy of *Fraser's Magazine* for April, 1838, belonging to the London Library, ascribing a portrait of Sidney Smith to Thackeray. Of course the writer's authority for this statement is unknown, but it opens up a new field for speculation. The principal drawings in this magazine known to be by Thackeray are the five plates accompanying "The Yellowplush Correspondence," and the four plates accompanying "Catherine."

In other fields Thackeray was as busy with his pencil as with his pen. He supplied twelve full-page illustrations to Douglas Jerrold's "Men of Character" (1838); and contributed two drawings to the *Anti-Corn Law Circular*, entitled, "Illustrations of the Rent-Laws: No. 1, Poles offering Corn; No. 2, The Choice of a Loaf." In 1840 he made arrangements with Cunningham, the publisher of "The Second Funeral of Napoleon," to issue a series of "Sketches by Spec," but only No. I appeared: "Britannia protecting the Drama," signed with the famous spectacles. Britannia is seated, holding a trident, sur-

rounded by lionesses, a panther and a lamb, and at her feet is a bust of Shakespeare, lying on its side, as a personification of the drama. Underneath the sketch is the following quaint letterpress: —

EXPLANATION OF THE HALLEGORY

This ladies and gentlemen is a Hallegory, and represents Britanny patronising hof the Drama — Look at the Drama laying at her feet & over it remark the Lioness is lifting hof her leg.

That's Britanny — she's holding hof a pitch fork (as well she may in sich company) and the hanimals round about her why, they are the principal hactors. For some parts (especially for BLOODY TRAGEDY) they beat the Common Garden ones hollow, and that's why Britanny goes to Dury Lane.

Look at the Lamb (hemblem of hinnocence!) has lying between the legs of the Panther, and thinking of the kind souls who got him of the situation. Britanny's caressing the lioness, for she's conspicuous for humanity, & theres no sich proof of kindness as being fond of the brute beasteses.

The figure of Britanny is taken from the rewerse of that famous coin, the British Halfpenny, some people think it would apply to coins more waluable and is the very thing for the REWERSE of A SOVERING.

The next important item in the artistic record of Thackeray's life is "The Paris

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Sketch-Book" (1840) with numerous sketches. This was followed by "Comic Tales and Sketches" (1841), a collection of stories that had appeared in various periodicals. In these volumes "The Yellowplush Correspondence" is furnished with five original plates in place of those which had accompanied it during its serial publication; "Some Passages in the Life of Major Gahagan" with four; and "The Professor" and "The Bedford Row Conspiracy" with one each. None of these were ever reprinted until recently, which seems strange, as they are among the best drawings ever executed by Thackeray, and the illustrations to "Major Gahagan" are delightful. There was also a pictorial title-page to "Comic Tales and Sketches," wherein are portrayed the figures of Titmarsh, Yellowplush, and Gahagan, who, the author tells us, little thinking how the word spoken in jest was by and by to come true, "are supposed to be marching hand in hand, and are just on the very brink of immortality."

The verses which appeared in the *Nation*



REDUCED FACSIMILE OF THE COVER TO THE FIRST  
EDITION OF "MRS. PERKINS'S BALL"

From the copy owned by Major William H. Lambert

[REDACTED]

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(1843), entitled "Daddy, I'm Hungry," were accompanied by an illustration. Thackeray also sent to the same paper a second drawing — a stage coach, a royal mail, with a Highland driver and guard in plaids, but *with no passengers*, at which the country people are jeering. This sketch, the late Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, the editor of the *Nation*, informed the present writer, was not printed, because the controversy with which it was concerned was brought to a premature close by a decree of the government. It was not accompanied by any verses, he added, because it told its story so well.

It is only necessary to give a list of the better-known works illustrated by the author: "Vanity Fair," "Pendennis," "The Virginians," and "Philip" (with the assistance of the late Frederick Walker), "Mrs. Perkins's Ball," "Our Street," "Dr. Birch and his Young Friends," and "The Kickleburys on the Rhine" — some copies of each of these Christmas Books contained coloured plates; "The Ring and the Rose," "Lovel

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the Widower," and the "Roundabout Papers."

The number of drawings contributed by Thackeray to *Punch* was immense. Besides those familiar to readers of his collected works, there are a hundred or more which have never yet been reprinted except in Messrs. Macmillan's editions of Thackeray's Works. Thackeray illustrated all the best of his burlesques, ballads, and tales which appeared in this periodical: "Miss Tickletohy's Lectures on English History," "The History of the Next French Revolution," "Wanderings of the Fat Contributor," "Jeames's Diary," "The Snobs of England," "Love Songs," "Prize Novelists," "Travels and Sketches in London," "Bow Street Ballads," "Mr. Brown's Letters to a Young Man about Town," and the "Discourses by Dr. Solomon Pacifico." This list, however, covers but a portion of the contributions, which begins with an initial letter to "The Legend of Jawbrahim-Heraudee" (June 18th, 1842), ends with the illustration to "A Second Letter to an Eminent Personage" (Sept.

THE  
BOOK OF SNOBS.



By  
*W. M. Thackeray*

LONDON: PUNCH OFFICE, 35, FLEET STREET.

[PRICE 2s. 6d.]

REDUCED FACSIMILE OF THE COVER TO THE FIRST  
EDITION OF "THE BOOK OF SNOBS"

From the copy owned by Major William H. Lambert



[REDACTED]

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25th, 1854), and includes social cuts, thumbnail sketches, initial letters, drawings accompanying his own writings, and even illustrations to the letter-press of other writers.

As an artist Thackeray was always at his best when illustrating his own writings. As has already been said, the chance of his making a success as a serious painter was extremely remote; but there has rarely been an artist who made his drawings so helpful to the text. Indeed, the characters are depicted as truly by the pencil as by the pen, and they tell the story together. Thackeray's drawing may not always have been correct, the perspective may occasionally have been wrong, and an arm may sometimes have borne a strong resemblance to a fin, but for quaint fancy and humour his illustrations have seldom been surpassed.

Take "Vanity Fair" and study the pictorial work from the initial W, at the beginning of Chapter I., to the "Finis" tail-piece, which shows the children shutting up the puppets in the box after the play is played

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out. Look at the illustration on the cover of the monthly parts and at that on the title-page — the former portraying the jester, standing on a cask, haranguing the yokels who are looking up at him, open-mouthed; the latter portraying the jester, lying on the ground, weary and worn, looking into a glass which reflects a countenance that is anything but gay. Look at "Rebecca's Farewell" — little Laura Martin crying bitterly because dear, kind Amelia Sedley is leaving the school, and Becky hurling out of the carriage the copy of Johnson's Dictionary, to the dismay of Miss Jemima Pinkerton, who, good-natured soul, had presented her with it as a souvenir of the Academy on Chiswick Mall: the look on Becky's face clearly indicates that she has no desire to remember the existence of Miss Pinkerton or the Academy, where, as a matter of fact, she had been far from happy. Look at Becky showing off "Miss Jenny," the doll, to her father's rather dissolute Bohemian friends; or, all alone, building a house of cards that, we know full well, will sooner or later fall, after



**MR. SEDLEY AT THE COFFEE-HOUSE**  
From an illustration to "Vanity Fair" by Thackeray  
*By permission of Messrs. Smith, Elder, & Co.*

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Myou

the fashion of such unstable edifices; or fishing, and trying to entangle stupid, hulking, conceited Mr. Jos; or as governess in the schoolroom, paying just so much attention to her charges as might be expected from a lady with her turn of mind. Why, the slender thread of the story of Miss Rebecca Sharp might be reconstructed from the drawings! Look at Dobbin and Cuff fighting (in a capital C); or at Miss Eliza Styles (better known in the world as Captain Rawdon Crawley) reading a letter from his wife at Mr. Barnet's, saddler, Knightsbridge, near the barracks; or at Moss arresting Rawdon in Gaunt Square, while Moss's companion whistles for a hackney coach to convey the trio to the sponging-house in Cursitor Street. Glance at the tail-piece to Chapter IX. — a delightful sketch of that sad jester, Thackeray himself. Turn over the pages and, on the eve of the battle of Waterloo, compare Becky slumbering tranquilly, with Mrs. Major O'Dowd as Venus preparing the arms of Mars, her husband, who is sleeping heavily. Turn over more pages, and observe Miss

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Horrocks of the ribbons playing the piano with the sycophantic Hester by the side, all admiration, and then glance at Sir Pitt nursed by Hester, the ill-conditioned, bullying attendant.

Take any volume at random. Here are the "Prize Novelists." Look at George de Burnwell, forgetful of his duties as a salesman, reading the godlike language of the blind old bard, "*Ton d'apameibomenos prosephe*," the while Martha Millwood wanted to be served with "sixpenn'orth of tea-dust." Look at little Mendoza fighting Bullock, the most famous bruiser of Cambridge, before whose fists the gownsmen went down like ninepins. Who does not remember the way in which the result of the battle is indicated?—"After the coroner's inquest, Mendoza gave ten thousand pounds to each of the bargeman's ten children." Or the interview between Louis Philippe and Mendoza? Or the two drawings of the executioner in "Barbazure," the first when apparently he is about to strike off the head of Fatima; the second in which he has, with one stroke



ILLUSTRATION BY THACKERAY FOR "SOME PASSAGES IN  
THE LIFE OF MAJOR GAHAGAN,"

*By permission of Messrs. Macmillan & Co., Ltd. See page 110*





1700

of his tremendous sword, decapitated Barba-zure? There is the giant's head, with its plumed cap, two feet higher in the air. But best of all is the attack of Harry Fogarty and the Onety-oneth regiment. What though two pistols are pointed at his head, and *Napoleon himself is exercising his old trade as an artilleryman*, Phil Fogarty escapes without a scar! What though Phil was captured! On his Irish horse Bugaboo he jumped over the Emperor on horseback, and went away with an army of a hundred and seventy-three thousand eight hundred men at his heels! More admirable burlesque sketches than these do not exist.

Or take "Pendennis." Look at Fanny Bolton in bed, her two little sisters sleeping by her side. The poor, foolish little girl is reading the young Lothario's novel entitled "Walter Lorraine," and thinking all sorts of flattering things about the author. Poor child! — she thought to die of a disappointed love; yet turn the pages and see "Fanny's new Physician," the hearty, rather dirty, Huxter, who consoled this Calypso.

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If space permitted it would be possible to go through each of the novels and point out drawing after drawing, delightful to regard. The "Christmas Books" owe more than half their charm to the plates. Take Thackeray's portraits of Mr. Titmarsh and Mr. Mulligan of Ballymulligan, of Mr. Flam, of Mr. Larkins; of those famous literary lights, Miss Bunion and Mr. Hicks; of Miss Trotter, whose face is bright at the arrival of the hideous but wealthy Lord Methusalah; of Mr. Beaumoris, Mr. Grig and Mr. Flinders; and of a host of others all present at "Mrs. Perkins's Ball." "Our Street" contained all sorts and conditions of people duly sketched by the author, from the inquisitive old lady looking out of the window to "the lady whom nobody knows;" from "the lion of the street," Clarence Bulbul, who wrote the Mayfair love-song, "The Cane-bottom'd Chair," which appeared in the columns of *Punch*, to that of "the happy family," in which is depicted the happy home-life of the Fairfaxes. "The Rose and the Ring" has al-

## Thackeray as Artist 119

ready delighted several generations of great and small children. The drawings were begun at Rome as Twelfth Night pictures for his children, and the whole was subsequently finished soon after in London. Thackeray revelled in this sort of work: all his life he loved to amuse children, and to his love for the "little 'uns" he has left this abiding memory.

Consider the originality of the drawings, the fancy, the whimsicality, the sense of humour which inspired them, the insight into life which they show, the power of bringing a whole scene vividly before the observer. Cavillers say that Thackeray was no artist; but if this is not art, why, then, the boundaries of art should at once be enlarged!

Thackeray was under no misapprehension as to the value of his gift, and he was well aware of his limitations. For instance, when a man in all good faith said to him, "But you *can* draw," he instantly set him down in his mind as a snob and a flatterer; and when Mr. Corkran found him grumb-

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ling over a sketch of his own: "Look," said he, "now George [Cruikshank], by a few touches, throwing some light or shadow here and there, would make this a picture. How it is I know not, but I certainly cannot do it at all." Thackeray frequently made fun of himself as a serious painter in his art criticisms in *Fraser's Magazine* and elsewhere; and in his very first paper on art, written in the form of a letter, he remarked: "I wish you could see my historical picture of 'Heliogabalus in the ruins of Carthage;' or the full-length of 'Sir Samuel and his Lady,' — sitting in a garden light, reading 'The Book of Beauty,' 'Sir Samuel catching a butterfly, which is settling on a flower-pot.'" And, still laughing at himself, he wrote to Edmund Yates in the fifties: "You have a new artist on the *Train*, I see, dear Yates. I have been looking at his work, and I have solved a problem. I find there *is* a man alive who draws worse than myself!"

Thackeray realized his lack of technical skill as an etcher. He asked the late Henry



ILLUSTRATION FOR "A LEGEND OF THE RHINE"

From the picture by G. Cruikshank

*By permission of Messrs. Smith, Elder, & Co. See page 134*



1900

Vizetelly, the founder of the *Pictorial Times*, to find him some one who, from his water colour sketch, would etch the frontispiece to "Notes of a Journey from Cornhill to Grand Cairo." The task was entrusted to a young man named Thwaites, who subsequently put on the wood a number of drawings for "Mrs. Perkins's Ball." Thackeray saw, however, that his originality was more valuable than an inferior hand's correctness of line. "I return the drawings after making a few alterations in them," he wrote to Mr. Vizetelly on one occasion. "Present Mr. Titmarsh's compliments to your talented young friend, and say M. A. T. would take it as a great favour if he would kindly confine his improvements to the Mulligan's and Mrs. Perkins's other guest's extremities. In your young gentleman's otherwise praiseworthy corrections of my vile drawings, a certain *je ne sais quoi*, which I flatter myself exists in the original sketches, seems to have given him the slip, and I have tried in vain to recapture it. Somehow I prefer my own



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Nuremburg dolls to Mr. Thwaites's superfine wax models."

"You will not easily find a second Thackeray," Charlotte Brontë wrote in 1848 *à propos* of Thackeray as a draughtsman and illustrator. "How he can render, with a few black lines and dots, shades of expression so fine, so real; traits of character so minute, so subtle, so difficult to seize and fix, I cannot tell — I can only wonder and admire. Thackeray may not be a painter, but he is a wizard of a draughtsman; touched with the pencil, the paper lives. And then his drawing is so refreshing: after the wooden limbs one is accustomed to see portrayed by common-place illustrators, his shapes of bone and muscle clothed with flesh, correct in proportion and anatomy, are a real relief. All is true in Thackeray. If Truth were again a goddess, Thackeray should be her high priest."

The praise is high. Whether it is too high time will show. His talent was of the Hogarth kind; and the works of Hogarth have not been adjudged valueless.

Thackeray himself always declared that although he was not a first-rate artist, he was not half so bad as the woodcutters made him appear. And an inspection of his drawings supports this view. Certainly, though he lacked academic correctness and technical mastery, the undeniable originality and humour of his sketches will secure for them a very long lease of life. They place him in the ranks of the caricaturists on a level with Doyle, and not far below Leech and Cruikshank, though, as far as imaginative power is concerned, he was the equal of the latter. Whatever may be the opinion of him as a draughtsman, few will venture to dispute his great merits as the illustrator of his own books.

## CHAPTER VI

### *Thackeray and his Illustrators*

**T**HACKERAY has had innumerable illustrators. These, for the purposes of this paper, may be divided into those who furnished the illustrations to the first editions, and those of a later generation who contributed to subsequent issues. To the former class belong the author, Cruikshank, Leech, Doyle, Kenny Meadows, and Frederick Walker — a galaxy of talent. To the latter, Fred Barnard, Lady Butler, John Collier, Harry Furniss, Luke Fildes, Linley Sambourne, E. J. Wheeler, W. J. Webb, W. Ralston, and many others; and, still more recently, F. W. Robinson, Francis Bedford, Hugh Thomson, C. E. Brock, and Miss Hammond. George du Maurier, strictly speaking, belongs also to this group, for his drawings to “Esmond” did not appear in the first edition; but as that



**MR. PIGEON. ("CAPTAIN ROOK AND MR. PIGEON")**

From a drawing by Kenny Meadows in "Heads of the People"

*See page 132*

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## Thackeray and his Illustrators 125

famous historical romance was published without illustrations, and as, consequently, his work did not supersede that of an earlier artist, he may be mentioned among the original men.

Reversing the usual order, the later drawings, as for the most part they are less familiar to the public, may be first considered. Both Mr. Robinson and Mr. Bedford illustrated "Esmond" — but as illustrators of this book the artists do not call for any particular mention. Their work was without distinction, conventional. Miss Chris Hammond has also illustrated the story, but, charming as are her designs, she has not quite succeeded in presenting the characters that Thackeray drew. Take, for example, one of the plates in which Beatrix and Henry Esmond are depicted. Henry has just told his cousin that the Duke of Hamilton, her affianced husband, has been slain. The news has overpowered her. She has looked wildly at her cousin, and has fallen back against the wall. "And you come here and — and — you killed him!"

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she cries. "No, thank heaven!" her kinsman says; "the blood of that noble heart does not stain my sword! In its last hour it was faithful to you." Esmond is portrayed as a superior person, calm and unmoved; nothing is shown of the horror of that last hour when the Duke was killed, nor of the despair of Beatrix, who had played for the strawberry leaves, had won, and at the eleventh hour had lost the prize. All her hopes were dashed to the ground. It was a tragedy for her, who later was to play for the love of a prince, and perhaps to dream of a crown. It was a tragedy, and Miss Hammond offers only a social cut with the performers in eighteenth-century garb.

The next two artists to whom reference must be made, and tribute paid, are Mr. Hugh Thomson and Mr. Charles E. Brock. Mr. Thomson, however, has not as yet illustrated many of Thackeray's stories, but what work he has done in this direction gives good reason to believe that the success that has attended it may incline him

## Thackeray and his Illustrators 127

to extend his labours. Nothing could be better than the drawings that accompany "The History of Samuel Titmarsh and the Great Hoggarty Diamond." Mr. Thomson has selected for one of his subjects the well-known scene in the jeweller's shop where the Countess recognises the medallion that gives the title to the story: "As I live," she cries, "it is the great Hoggarty Diamond." The Countess conjured up by Mr. Thomson is the half-silly yet not always undiscerning woman of the text; his Lady Jane and Lady Fanny are well-contrasted, the one dignified, the other brimming over with fun; while Polonius, the jeweller, is the early Victorian tradesman to the life. How well conceived is the drawing depicting the Brouchs at home. "Is there any duke in the land can give a better dinner than John Brough?" and that, too, of Brough at his office dictating to Samuel Titmarsh a letter that is to bring within his net the property of a well-to-do old woman.

Mr. Brock has recently issued some three



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hundred sketches distributed over an entire edition of Thackeray's prose works. These are delightful, admirably planned and well executed, and it may safely be said that readers who take up his edition to decide for themselves will be sure to find much to please them. What, for instance, could be better than the portrait of Blanche Crowder, that very large woman who in her flounces occupies the best part of a little drawing-room; or the sketch in which is shown Jeames de la Pluche, showing himself to Mary Ann Hoggins in all the glory of his captain's uniform of the North Diddlesex Regiment of Yeomanry Cavalry? In the tender little picture of the little *ingénue* confiding her secrets to the Old Foggy, Mr. Brock is perhaps at his best. And his best is very good.

The first complete edition of Thackeray's works was issued in 1867. This, which is known as the "Library" edition, included most of the drawings in the original issues. Only illustrations to "Esmond" by George du Maurier were added. Subsequently a "Standard" edition was brought out, but



THE DUEL IN LEICESTER FIELD  
From the drawing by George Du Maurier for "Henry Esmond"  
*By permission of Messrs. Smith, Elder, & Co.*

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## Thackeray and his Illustrators 129

this calls for no comment here. In 1877, however, a "Cheaper Illustrated" edition was placed on the market. This contained the work of the second group of illustrators, whose names have already been given. These drawings superseded the originals, only too often without improving upon them. The sketches by Mr. Harry Furniss accompanying "The Tremendous Adventures of Major Gahagan" are especially noteworthy. Curiously enough, they bear a marked resemblance to Thackeray's own illustrations to the story, though it is more than probable that the artist never saw the novelist's designs, for they were not issued when the burlesque was serialised, and only appeared in a volume of reprints which for a long time past has been very difficult to obtain. Mr. Furniss has entered into the spirit of burlesque, and, as it were, has received the character direct from its creator. It is impossible not to smile at the bombastic figures. Mr. Barnard ranks with Mr. du Maurier as an admirable illustrator of Thackeray's works. He was

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not, however, uniformly successful in his "Character Sketches." Too frequently he presented merely a caricature. Just a touch of caricature is permissible, perhaps, but caricature is criticism, and the illustrator should not be the critic of the creator, but a sympathetic friend. Mr. Barnard was at his best when portraying Becky Sharp, Dobbin, and Colonel Newcome, and he excelled himself in the presentation of the immortal Costigan. A critic might object that this Costigan looks too much like a sharper, instead of the poor, drunken, swindling reprobate he was. But there he sits in his daughter's dressing-room, on a chair in the corner of which is a "property" crown, disreputable enough, unkempt, and with his hat cocked over on one side. It is not easy to caricature the Captain, and this may be at least one reason why Mr. Barnard is most successful in this portrayal.

As has already been stated, the "Esmond" sketches by George du Maurier were the novelty of the edition of 1867. It may be said that no artist could have succeeded better



AT THE SICK MAN'S DOOR

From an illustration to "The Adventures of Philip" by Frederick Walker

*By permission of Messrs. Smith, Elder, & Co. See page 133*

Nov 11

## Thackeray and his Illustrators 131

in this difficult task, and, though many have tried, none have equalled the designs in black and white by this master of line. Rarely has an illustrator so happily caught the tone of a book, rarely has he executed his conception so admirably as Mr. du Maurier. Take the plates one by one. Look at little Henry being ordered by the Dowager Lady Castlewood to obey the Jesuit Father Holt in everything; or, a little later at Henry reproached unreasonably by the reigning Viscountess for having brought the smallpox from the village into the house; or, years after, see the lad, dressed as a divine, watching Rachel and Beatrix reading from the same book. Turn over the pages and look at the picture of the duel between Castlewood and Mohun (who was christened Henry by the novelist, though his name was Charles); or at Rachel visiting Harry in prison. See Harry at his mother's simple grave in the garden of the convent at Brussels; or drinking in the tavern with Addison and "Dick" Steele; or informing Beatrix of Hamilton's death. Or



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again, look at Beatrix being presented to the Pretender, or standing at bay against Esmond and her mother and brother. Each drawing is admirable indeed; the whole set is a triumph.

And now, having cleared the ground, one may devote some consideration to the artists who contributed to the original editions. Of Kenny Meadows it is easy to dispose. Indeed, it can scarcely be said that he illustrated Thackeray, for in all probability it would be more accurate to say that Thackeray furnished the letterpress to the drawings. Kenny Meadows drew a series of "Heads of the People, or, Portraits of the English," around which "distinguished writers," so runs the title-page, wrote "original essays." To this work Thackeray contributed "Mr. Rook and Captain Pigeon" (which had already appeared in the *New York Corsair*), "The Artists," and "The Fashionable Authoress." Five plates, almost unknown to the present generation, accompanied these "Character Sketches." Meadows was a capable mechanical draughtsman.



ILLUSTRATION BY CHARLES E. BROCK FOR "TRAVELS AND  
SKETCHES IN LONDON"

*By permission of Messrs. J. M. Dent & Co., Ltd. See page 126*

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## Thackeray and his Illustrators 133

There was nothing subtle in his humour. His work has not lived.

Frederick Walker only came upon the scene in the last years of Thackeray's life, when the novelist was weary and ill, and did not feel equal to illustrating his stories. Thackeray found it troublesome to draw on the wood the illustrations for "The Adventures of Philip," when that story was running through the *Cornhill Magazine*. Some of the drawings, executed on paper, when done on wood had not satisfied him. Walker was then introduced by his publisher, Mr. George Smith, of Messrs. Smith, Elder and Company; but this talented artist, after re-drawing a few of Thackeray's sketches, declared himself capable of better work, and declined to go on with the job. Eventually the work was left in his hands with only written suggestions, though sometimes a rough pen-and-ink sketch by the author was sent. Probably "Good Samaritans" was the first drawing executed by him on his own responsibility. Subsequently he illustrated the fragment of "Denis Duval,"

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which appeared posthumously. Frederick Walker has been much more successful in the more original, and, it may be assumed, more congenial branches of his art, as is only to be expected. His illustrations are admirably drawn, but his figures lack vitality, and the designs seem somewhat conventional.

George Cruikshank and John Leech occupy the proud position of the greatest humorous artists of the nineteenth century. Leech only contributed a few little sketches of initial letters to Thackeray's writings in *Punch*, a drawing to "An Eastern Adventure of the Fat Contributor," and one amusing illustration to "A Lucky Speculator." In this last stands Jeames in his livery, shaking hands with his master Sir George Flimsy, who congratulates him upon having won thirty thousand pounds in railroad speculation. This sketch is especially interesting, for it affords an opportunity to contrast Leech's and Thackeray's humour. Leech's Jeames is admirable, with the smirk on his face, the embarrassment caused by



AN ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN LEECH FOR "AN EASTERN  
ADVENTURE OF THE FAT CONTRIBUTOR"

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## Thackeray and his Illustrators 135

his master's unexpected friendliness, withal a certain smug complacency. Cruikshank, at whose feet Thackeray sat, was never at his best in his illustrations to the novelist's works. His drawings in "A Legend of the Rhine" are amusing, but not wholly satisfying; and the same may be said of those in "Stubbs's Calendar." But the plates to "Cox's Diary" are more like the real thing. Still, they will not bear comparison with the master's other work.

Neither was Richard Doyle happiest when illustrating "The Newcomes." Thackeray had intended to illustrate the story, and actually made two sketches for the first number, before he decided that Doyle should furnish the drawings. The two sketches were adopted and redrawn by Doyle. "He does beautifully and easily what I want to do, and can't," said the author. Doyle was a far better draughtsman, but he was in no degree Thackeray's superior in originality of design, and he was not his equal as an illustrator; yet he did his work well, and some of the plates were excellent. "A



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Letter from Clive" was one of these. There is the Colonel regaling the ladies of the regiment with Clive's letter, boring some of his hearers with the prattle, being laughed at by others, but with a kindly laugh, for the simple-hearted man is a great favourite, and every one who knows him and can appreciate his modesty, generosity, and honour, loves him. Where is there anything more touching than the Colonel as "A Student of the Old Masters," sitting alone before the pictures that his son loves, and praying to be able to understand wherein lies their beauty, so that he may be the companion of the lad even in his studies? Doyle is no less successful when "The Colonel tells Sir Barnes a bit of his mind" in the bank parlour before the bank clerks. The old man, towering over his nephew, looks the personification of injured innocence and dignity. "I repeat, sir, I consider you guilty of treachery, falsehood, and knavery. And if ever I see you at Bay's Club, I will make the same statement to your acquaintance at the west end



**JEAMES RETIRING FROM SERVICE**

From an illustration to "Jeames's Diary" by John Leech

*See page 134*

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of the town. A man of your baseness ought to be known, sir; and it shall be my business to make men of honour aware of your character. . . . Sir Barnes Newcome, for fear of consequences that I should deplore, I recommend you to keep a wide berth of me." Further on comes an illustration of a different kind. It is a street row at Newcome, where the election for the member of parliament is progressing. "Newcome versus Newcome." It is in Doyle's best manner, and is a magnificent picture of a crowd. And almost at the end of the book is another exquisite design. It is after the final quarrel between Clive and the Campaigner, and Clive asks his father to come and help put Tommy to bed. "The old man's eyes lighted up; his scared thoughts returned to him: he followed his two children up the stairs, and saw his grandson in his little bed; and as he walked home with him he told me how sweetly Boy had said 'Our Father,' and prayed God bless all who loved him, as they laid him to rest." And you see the child, in his white night-

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shirt on his knees at the foot of the little bed, and Clive standing reverently by the side; and the old, weary Colonel, seated, looking lovingly at his grandchild. It is a pretty, even a beautiful sketch, and with it we may take leave of the *preux chevalier sans peur et sans reproche*, whose heart was as that of a little child, and who so soon after was to stand in the presence of the Master.

If Doyle was on the whole successful in his treatment of the themes in "The New-comers," with "Rebecca and Rowena" he achieved a veritable success. His illustrations to this burlesque rank with his best work. He was less fettered by the more , frivolous text, and was able to give full play to his humour. Most amusing is the "Assault on the Castle of Chalus." Could anything be better than the expression of the fat man who, mounted on a six-foot ladder, is endeavouring to scale a twenty-foot wall, and suddenly becomes aware of three spears thrust through an aperture within an inch of his nose? "Ivanhoe slay-



**A STUDENT OF THE OLD MASTERS**

From an illustration to "The Newcomes" by Richard Doyle

*By permission of Messrs. Smith, Elder, & Co. See page 136*

Brody

## Thackeray and his Illustrators 139

ing the Moors" is every whit as good. It is apparently the knight *contra mundum*. The Moors, hundreds of them, have set upon him, and, with the greatest ease, he is killing them by tens. The ground is littered with the corpses of his victims, and in the background on the hillock stands his horse, calmly watching the scene with interest, and awaiting placidly his master's return.

Thackeray's own drawings for his works, like his poetry, have been overshadowed by his genius as a novelist. When the name of the great man is mentioned it conjures up the picture of the author of "Vanity Fair," "Pendennis," and "Esmond," and the excellence of his work as an illustrator has been overlooked. This is the misfortune of the public, through the fault of those responsible for the editions of his works having replaced much of his work with that of other men, who may have been better artists, but have never approached him as an illustrator.



## CHAPTER VII

### *Thackeray's Originals*

**H**E who would trace the prototypes of Thackeray's characters is met at the outset with the novelist's declaration that he never copied any one.

"Mr. Thackeray was only gently skilful and assimilative and combinative in his characters," said the late George Augustus Sala. "They passed through the alembic of his study and observation. The Marquis of Steyne is a sublimation of half-a-dozen characters. So is Captain Shandon; so are Costigan and the Mulligan. And the finest of Mr. Thackeray's characters — Becky, Dobbin, Jos Sedley, and Colonel Newcome — are wholly original, from the celebrity point of view at least." The accuracy of these statements will now be examined. Yet, though Thackeray may never deliberately have copied anybody, no doubt, as is the



**THE EDITOR OF "THE CABINET CYCLOPEDIA "**

**From a drawing by Daniel Maclise**

1430

## Thackeray's Originals 141

case with all writers, he must, though perhaps all unconsciously, have received suggestions for characters from persons with whom he was acquainted. That he used such suggestions, sometimes without realising that he was doing so, will be shown in the case of the creation of that particularly objectionable young lady, Miss Blanche Amory, who has come down to posterity as the author of "Mes Larmes."

Thackeray's characters, for the purposes of this paper, may best be divided into those of whose identity there can be no doubt; and those of which the prototype cannot with any degree of certainty be stated.

In "The Yellowplush Correspondence" — among the earliest of Thackeray's writings — Thackeray lampooned two well-known men of the day: Doctor Dionysius Lardner, the editor of an Encyclopædia and of the "Cabinet Library," as Docthor Dioclesius Larnar and Docthor Athanasius Lardner; and the novelist Bulwer-Lytton, who is made to announce himself as "Sawedwadgeorgeearlittnbulwig. In common with most of the *Fraser* set,

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Thackeray was never tired of attacking this author, whose dandiacal pretensions aroused his ire. He made a savage onslaught on "Ernest Maltravers" in "Our Batch of Novels for Christmas 1837;" and attacked with much bitterness "The Sea-Captain" in "Epistles to the Literati." "Catherine" was written avowedly to counteract the injurious effect of the "Newgate" novels of Lytton and Ainsworth. Later, Thackeray in *Punch* made fun of the many Christian names of "The Author of Pelham;" and in "The Snobs of England" made playful allusion to him as "the celebrated author . . . who has been taking leave of the public any time these ten years in his prefaces." He never met Lytton, and on the one occasion when he was asked to dinner for that purpose felt himself constrained to refuse the invitation as he was about to publish "George de Barnwell," the first of the delightful "Prize Novelists," though, as he remarked in his letter, the parody was written without malice. Later still a mutual friend of the novelists wrote to Lytton: "I saw Thack-

eray at Folkestone. He spoke of you a great deal, and said he would have given worlds to have burnt some of his writings, especially some lampoons written in his youth. He much wished to see you and express his contrition. His admiration as expressed to me was boundless; also his regret to have given vent to his youthful jealousy, etc. I tell you all this because I feel certain he meant me to repeat it." A more direct apology was made in the Preface to Messrs. Appleton's edition of his minor works (New York, 1853), of which he sent a copy, with a cry of "Peccavi," to the author of "The Caxtons." Yellowplush was innocent of a prototype, though when he reappeared after many years as "Jeames of Buckley Square" there is reason to suppose he was drawn from Mr. Foster, the reporter who for many years was the contributor of fashionable intelligence to the *Morning Post*, and was frequently caricatured as "Jenkins" in *Punch*. The villain of "The Yellowplush Correspondence," Deuceace, was a portrait. Once, when Thackeray was at Spa, he pointed out

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to Sir Theodore Martin a tall, shabbily dressed person. "That was the original of my Deuceace," he remarked. "I have not seen him since the day he drove me down in his cabriolet to my broker's in the City, where I sold out my patrimony and handed it over to him." "Poor devil," he added, "my money does n't seem to have thriven with him." It was this person that Thackeray had in his mind when in later years he wrote in the "Roundabout Papers" of "ogres." "Ogres in our days need not be giants at all," he said. "In former times, and in children's books, where it is necessary to paint your moral in such large letters that there can be no mistake about it, ogres are made with that enormous mouth and *ratelier* which you know of, and with which they can swallow down a baby, almost without using that great knife which they always carry. They are too cunning nowadays. They go about in society, slim, small, quietly dressed, and showing no especially great appetite. In my own young days there used to be play ogres — men who would devour a young fellow



AUTHOR OF "THE SIAMESE TWINS"

From a drawing by Daniel Maclise

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At the

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in one sitting, and leave him without a bit of flesh on his bones. They were quiet, gentlemanlike-looking people. They got the young fellow into their cave. Champagne, *pâté de fois gras*, and numberless good things were handed about; and then, having eaten, the young man was devoured in his turn." On the whole Thackeray rarely indulged in personalities, and such as he penned after the days of his youth appeared in the pages of *Punch*. He attacked William Harrison Ainsworth, when the latter, after purchasing from Colburn *The New Monthly Magazine*, announced he had secured the aid of several writers "eminent not only for talent but for high rank." This roused the Snobographer, who spoke his mind in a now little-known article called "Immense Opportunity." No sooner was this written than there came from Ainsworth to Thackeray an invitation to dinner, whereupon he must needs avow the authorship. "There's one thing I regret very much too, and must be told to you now in making a clean breast of it — is a certain paragraph in the next *Punch*, relat-

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ing to a certain advertisement about contributors, 'not only of talent, *but of rank.*' This moved my wrath; and has been hardly handled — this was before our meeting and explanation — I always must think it a very objectionable advertisement — but should n't have lifted my hand to smite my friend, had explanation come sooner, so that now you must be called upon to play the part of for-giver, in which I am sure you will shine." It may be remarked *en passant* that Thackeray, who had been a contributor to *The New Monthly Magazine* under Colburn, did not again appear in its pages after the change of proprietors; but his acquaintance with Ainsworth continued for many years. Thackeray's first contribution to *Punch* was "The Legend of Jawbrahim-Heraudee." This was a skit on John Abraham Heraud, a writer of poems — "The Descent into Hell," "The Judgment of the Flood," etc. — whose works are quite unknown to the present generation of readers. In the "Legend" the author contrived to introduce under orientalised forms the names of several of his contempora-

ries: Bulwer-Khan and his "Siamee-Geminee" is, of course, Bulwer's "Siamese-Twins;" Thomas the Moor is Thomas Moore; and Mollah Moongoomeree, Robert Montgomery, and his poem "Eblis" is the now-forgotten "Satan." Thackeray had already reviewed another poem by the same writer, "Woman: The Angel of Life," in an article that concluded with the last ten lines of the poem printed backwards. Ulphabeet-Bailee in the "Legend" is F. W. N. Bailey, who must not be confused with the better-known Haynes Bayly, the author of the once popular English song "We met — 't was in a crowd." "I'd be a Butterfly," an earlier success, had the distinction of being parodied by Thackeray, when an undergraduate at Cambridge University. F. W. N. Bailey was the originator of "The National Omnibus," the "first of the cheaper publications," as he styled it. Subsequently he founded the *National Standard of Literature, Science, Music, Theatricals, and the Fine Arts*, which grandiloquently named periodical he contrived to sell to Thackeray. The latter an-

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nounced the change in the columns of the paper: "We have got free of the Old Bailey, and changed the Governor." The *National Standard* never had a reasonable chance of success, and what Thackeray thought of the transaction in after days those who will may read in "Lovel the Widower" in the passage in which Mr. Batchelor tells the story of *his* newspaper venture. In his paper Thackeray lampooned and caricatured Louis Philippe, N. M. Rothschild, Crockford, Braham, and Alfred Bunn. Crockford, of course, was the proprietor of the famous London gaming house. Braham was the well-known tenor, of whom Sir Walter Scott remarked: "a beast of an actor, though an angel of a singer." He erected the Colloseum in Regent's Park, and, it is said, lost fifty thousand pounds in that speculation. Undismayed, however, he spent another thirty thousand pounds on the St. James's Theatre, erected on the site of Nerot's Hotel, a resort much frequented by Anglo-Indians, and famous as the place to which, upon their return to England, repaired Colonel Newcome, C. B., and James

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*Maclise*

1840

THE AUTHOR OF "SATAN"  
From a drawing by Daniel Maclise

Mr. U

Binnie, his civilian colleague in the Honourable East India Company's Service. Alfred Bunn was a theatrical manager with literary tastes which were later to provoke the attacks of Mr. Punch's young men. As a matter of fact the attentions of this band of talented writers to "the Poet Bunn" irritated their victim to such a degree that he called to his assistance the powerful aid of George Augustus Sala and with him concocted "A Word with *Punch*," in which a violent attack was made upon his principal assailants, Mark Lemon, Douglas Jerrold, and, perhaps the most virulent of them all, Gilbert Abbott à Beckett (Thackeray's "à Beckett the Beak"). Thackeray, however, had no part in the attacks on Bunn in *Punch*, but he had earlier caricatured him in "Flore et Zéphyr," and later introduced him as "Dolphin" in "Pendennis."

A favorite butt of Thackeray in *Punch* was James Grant, who must not be confused with James Grant, the novelist, nor with James Augustus Grant, the author of "A Walk Across Africa," and other books of travel. The



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James Grant in question was the editor of the *Morning Advertiser*, and author of "The Great Metropolis" and "Paris and its People," both of which books were reviewed by Thackeray in *Fraser's Magazine*. "The Snobs of England" contains many allusions to the author's contemporaries. Benjamin Disraeli is introduced as "Ben de Minorities;" Theodore Hook as "Theodore Crook;" Mrs. Gore, the author of "Mothers and Daughters" and other novels, as "Mrs. Cruor;" Mrs. Trollope, the authoress of "The Vicar of Wrexhill" and other works of fiction, and the mother of Anthony, as "Mrs. Wallop;" Thomas Babington Macaulay as "Tom Macau;" and Thomas Slingsby Duncombe, member of Parliament for Finsbury, "Thomas of Finsbury." "The Duke of Coeurdelion" has, as prototype, the Duke of Buckingham, an aristocrat of the old school, who, at the eleventh hour, forcibly prevented the marriage of his twenty-six-year-old daughter with a well-to-do, well-born gentleman, against whom it could only be urged that he was not a nobleman. Mr. Stephen

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Price appeared as Captain Shindy, and a woodblock presenting a portrait of Mr. Wyndham Smith was inserted among the sporting snobs. The originals of "*Punch's* Prize Novelists," now better known as "Novels by Eminent Hands," are more or less obvious. "E. L. B. L. B. B. L. L. B. B. B. L. L. L." is Bulwer Lytton; "B. de Shrewsbury" is Benjamin Disraeli, who at that time was member of Parliament for Shrewsbury; "The Authoress of 'Dukes and Dejeuners,' 'Hearts and Diamonds,' 'Marchionesses and Milliners,' etc., etc.," is Mrs. Gore; "G. P. R. Jeames" is, of course, George Payne Rainsford James, the author of "*Richelieu*" and many other novels, all bearing a strong family likeness; "Harry Rollicker" is Charles Lever, and "The Author of 'The Last of the Mulligans,' 'Pilot,' etc.," is, of course, Fenimore Cooper.

Several of the characters in "*Vanity Fair*" had prototypes in real life. It is commonly supposed that the inimitable Becky had an original, though her name is known to few.

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- Lady Ritchie saw her once. She drove to Young Street to see Thackeray, a most charming, dazzling little lady, dressed in black, who greeted the novelist with great affection and brilliancy, and on her departure presented him with a bunch of violets. Thackeray always parried with a laugh all questions concerning this prototype. However, a lady who knew him intimately was not so reticent. She said the character of Becky was an invention, but it had been suggested to him by a governess who lived in the neighbourhood of Kensington Square, and was the companion of a very rich and very selfish old woman. The governess, strange to say, followed in the footsteps of Becky. Some years after the publication of "Vanity Fair" she ran away with the nephew of the lady with whom she was living, and for a while made a sensation in society circles, quite in Mrs. Rawdon Crawley's style and entirely by Mrs. Rawdon Crawley's methods. This living handsomely on nothing a year resulted in the usual way; and in the end the ex-governess fled the country, and was to



AUTHOR OF "VIVIAN GREY"  
From a drawing by Daniel Maclise

Mr. U

be seen on the Continent flitting from gambling-place to gambling-place.

Charles Kingsley used to tell a good story of a lady who confided to Thackeray that she liked "Vanity Fair" exceedingly. "The characters are so natural," she said, "all but the baronet, Sir Pitt Crawley, and surely he is overdrawn; it is impossible to find such coarseness in his rank of life." "That character," the author smilingly replied, "is almost the only exact portrait in the book." The identity of the prototype was not revealed for many years; but it has recently been asserted that the character was sketched from a former Lord Rolle. "Sir Pitt's letters to Becky were very badly spelt and written," remarks the gentleman who puts forward this theory, "and I may say that I have in my possession a letter written by Sir Robert Brownrigg to His Royal Highness the Duke of York when Commander-in-Chief of the British army, complaining that a report received from Lord Rolle, as Lord-Lieutenant of his county, was so badly written that he could not decipher it."

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"You know that you are only a piece of Amelia," Thackeray wrote to Mrs. Brookfield. "My Mother is another half; my poor little Wife — *y est pour beaucoup*." Mrs. Brookfield was a daughter of Sir Charles Elton, who lived at Clevedon Court, Somerset — which house figures in "Esmond" as Castlewood. Her husband, the Rev. W. H. Brookfield, was one of Thackeray's intimates, and their friendship dated back to their university days. Thackeray paid tribute to Brookfield's fine qualities by drawing him as Frank Whitestock in "The Curate's Walk;" and when asked towards the end of his life which of his friends he loved the best, replied: "Why, dear old Fitz, of course; and Brookfield." Fitz was Edward FitzGerald, the translator of "Omar." Another old college chum, John (afterwards Archdeacon) Allen, was presented as Dobbin, who at the outset obviously was to be the butt of the story; but in the end the character, mastering its creator, developed into the fine, noble gentleman we know.

Although all are agreed that the original

of the Marquis of Steyne was a Marquis of Hertford, the question is, which Lord Hertford is entitled to the invidious distinction? The first marquis lived too early, and for many reasons the fourth may be put out of court. Mr. George Somes Layard plumps for the third marquis; Mr. S. M. Ellis is all for the second, and writes as follows to the present writer: "May I give my reasons for thinking Thackeray had Francis, second Marquis of Hertford, in his mind when writing his description of Lord Steyne and Gaunt House? The third marquis was the son of the second, and both were intimate friends of George IV., who in point of age came just between the two: second marquis born 1743; George IV. born 1762; third marquis born 1777. Now, the second marquis did not die until 1822, which would cover the 'Vanity Fair' period. Again, if chronology may be relied upon, there is much evidence in the book itself that points to the second marquis being Steyne. For instance, in the chapter entitled 'Gaunt House,' where the 'fast' history of the



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house is given, Thackeray says: 'The Prince and Perdita have been in and out of that door,' etc. Now the Prince of Wales finally separated from Mrs. Robinson in 1783, when the future third marquis was only six years old. In the same paragraph Thackeray mentions Égalité, Duke of Orleans, as a friend of Steyne's. Égalité was executed in 1793; and then, so far as dates are concerned, the Gaunt House period is in the twenties, when the third marquis would have been forty years old or so, whereas Lord Steyne is described as an old man and a grandfather. Of course these dates may prove nothing in view of an author's license to transpose and alter such things to suit his purpose. My strongest point is that the second marquis was a notorious *roué*, whereas his son, the third marquis, was nothing out of the way in this attribute — for a Regency buck. But his ancient father was a byword even at this period. He was called 'The Hoary Old Sinner,' and is constantly mentioned in the *Examiner*, the *Courier*, and the other papers which supported the cause of



THE REV. WILLIAM HENRY BROOKFIELD

From the painting by Samuel Laurence

*By permission of Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, Ltd. See page 154*

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Queen Caroline against the king and his friends. One of the most notorious acts with which the second Lord Hertford excited society was the seduction of Mrs. Massey. This is alluded to by Thomas Moore in his satirical series of poems, 'The Twopenny Post-Bag,' where he calls the marquis 'the hoary old sinner.' Of course Lord Hertford's wife was the mistress of George IV., and her husband and son were very complaisant over the matter. There is one other point: Thackeray says Lord Steyne was 'Lord of the Powder Closet;' the second Marquis of Hertford was Lord Chamberlain of the king's household, but his son was not."

Mr. Layard's opinion, however, is stated very plainly: "No one who has taken the trouble to investigate the lives of the three marquises can hesitate for a moment in identifying the Marquis of Steyne with the third Marquis of Hertford." And he dwells on the resemblance between Sir Thomas Lawrence's portrait of the third marquis and the "suppressed" woodcut of Lord

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Steyne contained in the first issue of "Vanity Fair." Both he and Mr. Charles Whibley, the well-known critic and the author of a recent interesting monograph on Thackeray, assume that Lord Steyne of "Vanity Fair" and Lord Monmouth of "Coningsby" are drawn from the same peer. But is not this assumption too readily made? It is generally accepted that Lord Monmouth is the third Marquis of Hertford. Yet, though there are so many differences between Lord Monmouth and Lord Steyne, the critics are content to state that these differences arise naturally from the diverse treatment of the two authors. For instance, Mr. Whibley remarks that Thackeray gives us a brute, Disraeli a man. Yet this, to a certain extent, is explained if Thackeray drew from the second and Disraeli from the third marquis. But surely there is a still simpler explanation. Disraeli presented in "Coningsby" a *roman-à-clef*, a political study of a period, and naturally he was at pains to give an accurate portrait of his model. With Thackeray the case was very different. He was

writing a work of fiction and nothing more. He had heard stories of the Marquises of Hertford, and when he created a profligate peer, what more likely than that he should tack these stories on to his creation? Or, being in possession of these stories, he drew a purely fancy portrait of Lord Hertford, since there was no reason why he should trouble to study the character of the nobleman in question. With these suggestions we may take leave of the "richly-dressed figure of the Wicked Nobleman, on which no expense has been spared, and which Old Nick will fetch away at the end."

There seems no doubt, however, that the Marquis of Steyne's managing man, Wenham, was drawn from the managing man of the third Marquis of Hertford, John Wilson Croker, who of course stood for Rigby in "Coningsby." Now Rigby is Croker to the life, as seen by the prejudiced. In some such fashion would Macaulay have depicted him. Unfair as is the portraiture, this is not the place to rehabilitate the much-abused, well-hated politician. Wenham, however, could

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have been no more flattering to the original, for he is depicted as a mean, despicable creature. Thackeray had coals of fire poured upon him a little later when he was proposed at the Athenæum Club as a candidate to be elected without ballot as a person of distinguished eminence in literature, for then Croker supported him. It must have been strange indeed, as Milman remarked, to see Macaulay and Croker row together in the same boat. A good story is told of Croker and the author of "Vanity Fair." When Croker was dead a mutual friend told Thackeray how Croker had begged his wife to seek out some homeless boys to stay with them from Saturday till Monday. "They will destroy your flower-beds and upset my inkstands, but we can help them more than they can hurt us." Thackeray choked, and went to see Mrs. Croker, and assured her he would never again speak or think ill of her husband.

"Pendennis," so the story goes, was based upon a true anecdote of Brighton life, told to Thackeray by the Misses Smith (daughters



THE EDITOR OF "BOSWELL'S JOHNSON"

From a drawing by Daniel MacLise



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of Horace, part author of "Rejected Addresses") when he told them he had to produce the first number of a novel in a few days, and had no idea how to start one. In gratitude he christened his heroine Laura after a younger sister, Mrs. Round. When "Pendennis" was finished the original Laura was very angry, or at least pretended to be very angry. "I'll never speak to you again, Mr. Thackeray," she declared. "You know I meant to marry Bluebeard" — Lady Rockminster's name for George Warrington. It may, perhaps, be remarked that it is rather curious that Thackeray should have christened his heroine Laura Bell, for that was the name of a *demi-mondaine* of the day, so notorious that it is inconceivable that such a man about town as the author should not have heard of her. Young Pendennis was a great favourite with the author, which is not unnatural when it is remembered that the character was in great part drawn from himself. "Being entirely occupied with my two new friends, Mrs. Pendennis and her son, Arthur Pendennis," Thackeray wrote

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from Brighton to the Brookfields, "I got up very early again this morning, and was with them for more than two hours before breakfast. He is a very good-natured, generous young fellow, and I begin to like him considerably. I wonder if he is interesting to me from selfish reasons, and because I fancy we resemble each other in many parts." Pendennis followed closely in the footsteps of his creator. Both went to the Grey Friars' School — the Charterhouse of reality — where Dr. Swishtail, the head-master, was as severe with the eponymous hero as Dr. Russell with the novelist when a lad. Pendennis lived for a while at Ottery St. Mary, in a house — Fair Oaks — that corresponds to Larkbeare, the residence of Thackeray's mother and stepfather. Pendennis sent poems to the *County Chronicle and Chatteris Champion*, Thackeray to the *Western Luminary*. Pendennis made friends with the vicar, Doctor Portman, who is no doubt drawn from Thackeray's friend, the Rev. Dr. Cornish. Pendennis went to the Chatteris Theatre, as we may be sure Thackeray, al-

ways a lover of the theatre, visited the Exeter Theatre. It is not known that Thackeray fell in love with an actress in the Exeter Theatre stock company, but so autobiographical, apparently, is this part of the novel that Mr. Herman Merrivale is inclined to think the fiction is based upon fact. Miss Emily Costigan, better known under her theatrical name of Fotheringay, was freely adapted from Miss O'Neill, who became Lady Becher. We have it on Thackeray's authority that her father, Captain "Jack" Costigan, was a fancy portrait. Thackeray, however, in later life, met some one who might have sat for the immortal captain.

"In the novel of 'Pendennis,' written ten years ago," he mentioned in "De Finibus," "there is an account of a certain Costigan whom I had invented (as I suppose authors invent their personages out of scraps, heel-taps, odds and ends of characters). I was smoking in a tavern parlour one night, and this Costigan came into the room alone — the very man — the most remarkable resemblance of the printed sketches of the man,

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of the rude drawings in which I had depicted him. He had the same little coat, the same battered hat, cocked on one eye, the same twinkle in that eye. 'Sir,' said I, knowing him to be an old friend whom I had met in unknown regions; 'Sir,' I said, 'may I offer you a glass of brandy and water?' '*Bedad, ye may,*' says he; '*and I'll sing ye a song tu.*' Of course he spoke with an Irish accent. Of course he had been in the Army. In ten minutes he pulled out an Army Agent's account, whereon his name was written. A few months after, we read of him in a police court."

Pendennis went later to St. Boniface's College, Oxbridge, as Thackeray had been to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he was a more notorious character than his prototype. Crump of Boniface was Whewell, Master of Trinity. Subsequently Pendennis came to town to study law, which, however, he soon abandoned for journalism, as Thackeray had done before him. Like Thackeray, too, he lived in the Temple, shared chambers with George Warrington,



*William Maginn*

1807-1874

**"THE DOCTOR"**

From a drawing by Daniel Maclise

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as Thackeray had lived with Tom Taylor or another.

"You will find much to remind you of old talk and faces — of William John O'Connell, Jack Sheehan, and Andrew Arcedechne," Thackeray wrote to George Moreland Crawford, who had nursed him through the illness that nearly brought "Pendennis" to a premature conclusion. "There is something of you in Warrington, but he is not fit to hold a candle to you, for, taking you all round, you are the most genuine fellow that ever strayed from a better world into this. You don't smoke, and he is a confirmed smoker of tobacco. Bordeaux and port were your favourites at the Deanery<sup>1</sup> and the Garrick, and Warrington is always guzzling beer. But he has your honesty, and, like you, could not posture if he tried. You have a strong affinity for the Irish. May you some day find an Irish girl to lead you to matrimony! There's no such good

<sup>1</sup> The "Deanery" was an old-fashioned public-house near St. Paul's, so referred to by a certain set because it was often graced by the presence of Barham, of "Ingoldsby Legends" fame, a canon of the neighbouring cathedral.



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wife as a daughter of Erin." Lady Ritchie thinks there is something of her father in Warrington, and perhaps a likeness to Edward FitzGerald; and it has been said that the character was based partly on George Stoven Venables, whose name figures in Thackeray's personal history as the smasher of the latter's nose in a fight at the Charterhouse. The noblemen on the staff of the paper "written by gentlemen for gentlemen" were Lords William and Henry Lennox and a brother of the Duke of St. Albans, of whom Sheehan said : "His name Beauclerc is a misnomer, for he is always in a fog and never clear about anything." Most important of all men of letters in "Pendennis" is Captain Shandon, the prototype of which character is Doctor William Maginn. Thackeray's acquaintance with Maginn dates from the days when the former was studying painting in Paris. The story that Thackeray gave Maginn five hundred pounds is probably apocryphal. It could not have happened after the failure of the *Constitutional* newspaper, for that carried with it

all that remained of the young man's patrimony. It is said, however, that in Paris Thackeray and Maginn discussed the scheme of a magazine, which the former was to capitalize; and this may have started the rumour. Anyhow, the two men were close friends, and it was no doubt the Doctor who introduced Thackeray as a contributor to *Fraser's Magazine*, of which periodical he was the editor and, perhaps, the most valuable contributor. "I have carried money, and from a noble brother man-of-letters, to some one not unlike Shandon in prison, and have watched the beautiful devotion of his wife in that place," Thackeray has written. But Maginn was a greater than Shandon in whom only one side of him — and that the worse side — is shown. Maginn was probably all that is depicted in Shandon, but he was also much more. He may have written — indeed, he did write — articles that were models of virulent abuse; but he was a parodist of no mean merit, and his Shakespearian essays and his Latin versions of "Chevy Chase" and other

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ballads extorted praise even from his enemies.

Foker differs from Thackeray's other characters because it was an accurate portrait of a member of the Garrick Club. It was most probably this breach of etiquette that was the cause of Thackeray being black-balled at the Traveller's Club, where the ballot is by members and not by the committee, the members fearing lest any one of them who had marked peculiarities of manner might be introduced in some later novel. The member of the Garrick who sat for Foker was Andrew Arcedechne, who, as says the Hon. Henry J. Coke in his "Tracks of a Rolling-stone," was so like a seal that he was often called "Phoca" by his intimates. Arcedechne was small in stature and eccentric in his mode of dressing; he drove stage-coaches as an amateur, loved cock-fighting and the prize-ring and had a large estate in Norfolk. It is pleasant to record, that no quarrel between him and his lampooner was occasioned by the publication of "Penden-

nis." Thackeray always declared his model to be "not half a bad fellow," and Arcedechne remarked: "Awfully good chap old Thack was. Lor' bless you, he did n' mind me a bit. But I did take it out of him now and again. Never gave him time for a repartee." The victim did, indeed, sometimes contrive to score off his persecutor and once or twice with marked success, and Thackeray became uncomfortable in his presence. When the great man was telling a story in the smoking room at the Garrick, and Arcedechne entered, the narrator would hesitate, stammer, and break down; whereupon the other, with a bland smile would say, "Proceed, sweet warbler, thy story interesteth me!" — which remark invariably reduced Thackeray to silence, and often to flight. Or Arcedechne would be in the room and when the novelist entered would greet him affably, "Ha! Mr. Thackeray! literary cove! Glad to see you, sir. How's Major Dobbing?" and would summon a waiter and tell him to "Give this gent a glass of 'Foker's Own,' and


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score it up to yours truly!" Once Arce-  
dechne scored a triumph over Thackeray  
that has become historic. He went to the  
first lecture on the "English Humourists  
of the Eighteenth Century," and afterwards  
Thackeray asked him how he had liked it.  
"Very good, Thack, my boy, very good.  
*But wants a pianner!*"

Pendennis naturally went to Thackeray's  
haunts, "The Cave of Harmony" and "The  
Back Kitchen," better known as "Evans's  
Coffee-house," and "The Cider Cellars," and  
at the latter heard Mr. Nadab, the improvisa-  
tore, who in life was known as Charles Sloman,  
again introduced into "The Newcomes" as  
"the great little Jew at the Coal Hole." He  
was intimate with Thackeray's friends and  
acquaintances, and in his illness was at-  
tended by Thackeray's doctor, Elliotson —  
to whom "Pendennis" is dedicated — who  
figures in the story as Doctor Goodenough.  
Major Pendennis's noble friend, Lord Col-  
chicum, was a sketch from life of the very  
naughty Lord Lonsdale of the day; and  
there was, says Thackeray, writing to Amer-



*Yours faithfully*  
Theodore P. Hook

AUTHOR OF "SAYINGS AND DOINGS"   
From a drawing by Daniel Maclise

Mr. O

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ican intimates, "a friend of mine who is coming out to New York, and to whom I shall give a letter — a queer fellow, the original of the Chevalier Strong."

Many of the journalists and men of letters in the book had their prototypes. Bungay is a caricature of Colburn the publisher, and the proprietor of the *New Monthly Magazine*, to which at one time Thackeray was a contributor. Colburn is eminent among the publishers who have missed opportunities, for he declined to commission Thackeray to finish a novel of which he was shown the earlier chapters, and which is known to us as "Vanity Fair." It is said that the late W. H. Wills, the business manager of *Household Words*, suggested to Thackeray the publisher's reader who, "from having broken out in the world as a poet of a tragic and suicidal cast, had now subsided into one of Mr. Bungay's back shops, as reader for that gentleman." A visitor at one of Bungay's dinner-parties, Captain Sumph, with his silly stories of Byron, was sketched from Captain Medwin, the author



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of a volume of dull "Conversations with Byron." Mr. Wagg, a henchman of Lord Steyne, was drawn from Theodore Hook, the author of some now almost forgotten novels, and, more particularly, of the Ramsbottom Letters in the *John Bull* newspaper. Those letters were parodied by Thackeray in the *Snob* and the *Gownsmen*, weekly periodicals written and published by Cambridge undergraduates in 1829 and 1830. Thackeray actually had the audacity to put into Wagg's mouth one of Hook's own jokes. Wagg is made to ask Mrs. Bungay, "Does your cook say he's a Frenchman?" and to reply, when that lady expresses her ignorance, "Because if he does, he's a quizzin' yer (*cuisinier*)." Mr. Charles Whibley informs us that "Archer, the quidnunc, whose advice is always wanted at the palace, and whose taste for cold beef the Duke himself consults, is none other than Tom Hill of the *Monthly Mirror*, whom Theodore Hook painted as Hull in 'Gilbert Gurney.'"

Of all the women in "Pendennis," only one has been traced to an original. Like

Becky, Blanche Amory, if, strictly speaking, she had not a prototype, at least was suggested by an acquaintance. "At the train, whom do you think I found? Miss G——, who says she is Blanche Amory, and I think she is Blanche Amory; amiable at times, amusing, clever, and depraved," Thackeray wrote to the Brookfields. "We talked and persiflated all the way to London, and the idea of her will help me to a good chapter, in which I will make Pendennis and Blanche play at being in love, such a wicked, false, humbugging, London love as two *blasé* London people might act and half-deceive themselves that they were in earnest. That will complete the cycle of Mr. Pen's worldly experiences, and then we will make, or try to make, a good man of him." The resemblance of Blanche Amory to Miss G—— was distinct enough for Mrs. Carlyle to notice. "Not that poor little —— is quite a little devil as Thackeray, who has detested her from a child, has here represented," she remarked. "But the looks, the manners, the wiles, the *larmes*, and all that sort of

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thing are perfect." This was almost magnanimous of Mrs. Carlyle, for both she and her husband disliked the girl. "Oh, my dear!" Mr. Carlyle exclaimed when she went away, "we cannot be sufficiently thankful." Not that Carlyle's objection counts for much, for he was a gay ill person to get along with.

In Thackeray's remaining books (other than the historical works) it is not so easy to trace originals. Abraham Hayward, whose elderly effigy was cartooned in "Vanity Fair," was also introduced into "Mrs. Perkins's Ball" as Mr. Flam, and, Mr. Locker-Lampson has recorded, like that exquisite he had curling locks, a neat little foot, a lip vermillion, and an Abraham nose. There was a prototype for Dorothea, and probably for other heroines of Mr. George Savage FitzBoodle's amorous adventures. Captain Granby Calcroft lives as Captain Granby Tiptoff; and Mr. J. M. Evans, one of the proprietors of *Punch*, was portrayed in "The Kickleburys on the Rhine." Miss Baxter claims that her sister Lucy (to whom,

on her seventeenth birthday, the novelist sent the verses, "Seventeen rosebuds in a ring") suggested at least some aspects of Ethel Newcome, the sweet and wayward — "my sister at that time going much into (American) society — she was not yet twenty, and had both wit and beauty. In his picture of Ethel Newcome, as she holds a little court about her at one of the great London balls, Thackeray reproduces some impressions made by the New York girl. Some of Ethel's impatience for the disillusion of society, its spiteful comment and harsh criticism, might well be reflections from discussions with my sister in the Brown House library, where Mr. Thackeray passed many an hour talking of matters grave and gay."

In "The Newcomes" only a few characters can be identified. Lady Kew is said to have had her original in Lady Langford; and the Rev. Charles Honeyman, the incumbent of Lady Whittlesea's Chapel, so "great in the lachrymatory line," was, it was commonly reported, drawn from a

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well-known preacher, whose enemies said he had missed his vocation, inasmuch as he should have been an actor. Doyle's portrait of Fred. Bayham suggested Forster's burly figure, but there, in spite of suggestions to the contrary, the resemblance ends; though Gandish, the painter who kept an art-school in Newman Street, is stated by Mr. T. H. S. Escott to have had his prototype in "Professor" Percival Leigh's father, who had a drawing-school in the same neighbourhood. Lastly, must be mentioned Colonel Thomas Newcome, C. B., who, like "Jos" Sedley and James Binnie, was the outcome of Thackeray's Anglo-Indian connections: like them he stepped out of the Oriental Club in Hanover Square. After visiting that institution when "The Newcomes" was appearing, a friend said to Thackeray, "I see where you got your Colonel." "To be sure you would," said the novelist, "only I had to *angelicise* the old boys a little." Mr. Alexander F. Baillie, the historian of the Oriental Club, indicates as an instance of

Thackeray's carefulness, that in "Vanity Fair" when Jos returned for the first time from India, he drove his horses in the Park; he dined at the fashionable taverns (for the Oriental Club was not as yet invented); he frequented the theatres, and so on; but that when the Collector of Boggley-Wallah came home in 1827, three years after the Oriental Club was founded, "his very first point, of course, was to become a member of the Club, where he spent his mornings in the company of his brother Indians, where he dined, or whence he brought home men to dine."

It has been asserted by those who were acquainted with Thackeray's family circle that the character was taken from one or more of his relatives — from Major Carmichael Smyth, of the Bengal Engineers; or General Charles Carmichael, of the 2nd European Bengal Light Cavalry (20th Hussars); or Colonel John Dowdeswell Shakespeare. It matters little from which of these the *preux chevalier* was drawn. Thackeray was at his old school, the Charterhouse, on

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Founder's Day, 1854, when the idea struck him to make the Colonel a "Codd" (a colloquial term for a Poor Brother of the Charterhouse). He invited a boy with whom he was acquainted to introduce him to Captain Light, an old army man whom reduced circumstances had compelled to seek the shelter of Thomas Sutton's Hospital. Many times he went to see the veteran, who gleefully told all and sundry, "I'm sitting for Colonel Newcome." As readers of the book can never forget, the Colonel spent the last months of his life as a "Codd," and it was in that quiet retreat he drew his last breath. "At the usual evening hour the chapel bell began to toll, and Thomas Newcome's hands outside the bed feebly beat a time. And just as the last bell struck, a peculiar sweet smile shone over his face, and he lifted up his head a little, and quickly said 'Adsum!' and fell back. It was the word we used at school, when names were called; and lo, he, whose heart was as that of a little child, had answered to his name, and stood

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in the presence of The Master." Six years after the publication of "The Newcomes," Thackeray's stepfather passed away at a patriarchal age and he was buried in the Episcopal Church at Ayr, where there is a memorial brass, bearing the following inscription:

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF MAJOR WILLIAM HENRY  
CARMICHAEL SMYTH, OF THE BENGAL ENGINEERS,  
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE AT AYR, 9TH SEPTEMBER,  
1861; AGED 81 YEARS.

*"Adsum.*

"And lo, he whose heart was as that of a little child had answered to his name, and stood in the presence of the Master." — *Newcomes*, vol. iii., chap. 26.

On the rebuilding of the church, his grave was brought within the walls. He was laid to rest immediately beneath this place by his step-son, William Makepeace Thackeray. This memorial was put in 1887 by some members of the family.



## CHAPTER VIII

### *The London of "Esmond" and "The Virginians"*

THE London of "Esmond" and "The Virginians" is virtually the London of the eighteenth century. It was the age of the splendid, embroidered, beruffled, snuff-boxed, red-heeled, impertinent Folly, that withal knew how to make itself respected. It was the age of the *bel air* and the dignified mien, of perukes and powder and paint, when gallantry was the recognised pursuit and morality was at nearly so low an ebb as in that period of mad excesses, the Restoration. It was the age when men drank deep and swore heavily, when swords were drawn on the slightest provocation and women were left widows through the consequences of careless words uttered by excited men at the gaming-tables. It was the age of three-bottle men and of all-night sittings at tav-

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erns. The “pace” of the *viveurs* of the day was awful. Peterborough lived into the very jaws of death, and Godolphin laboured all day and gambled all night; while Bolingbroke in a letter to Swift, written when he had retired to Dawling, mentioned that he rose at six o’clock in the morning, refreshed, serene, and calm, and called to mind the time when he lived in London and about that hour would be going to bed, surfeited by pleasure and jaded with business. An examination of the habits of men of the *beau monde* of the day cannot but fill us with envy of the strength of their constitutions. Of all the wits only Pope, always more or less an invalid, did not lead this life, and of all the wits only he and Prior were not fat. Swift, Addison, Steele, Gay, Thomson, all were corpulent, as must be those who, taking no exercise, spend their time, drinking, in heated rooms.

The difference between the present time and the reign of Queen Anne is not to be explained merely by the lapse of two centuries. There was less difference between the

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years 1700 and 1500 than in the later similar interval. Progress has made immense strides, and as Bulwer Lytton would have said, the British Lion is aroused and the schoolmaster is abroad.

✓ A picture of the day is conjured up by Thackeray: "The maypole rises in the Strand again in London, the churches are thronged with daily worshippers, the *beaux* are gathering in the coffee-houses, the gentry are going to the drawing-room, the ladies are thronging to the toy-shops, the chairmen are jostling in the streets, the footmen are running with links before the chariots or fighting round the theatre doors. In the country I see the young squire riding to Eton with his servants behind him, and Will Wimble, the friend of the family, to see him safe. To make that journey from the squire's and back, Will is a week on horseback. The coach takes five days between London and Bath. The Judges and the Bar ride the circuit. If my Lady comes to town in her post-chariot, her people carry pistols to fire a salute on Captain Macheath if he should appear, and her couri-

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ers ride ahead to prepare apartments for her at the great caravanseries on the road; Boniface receives her under the creaking sign of the ‘Bell’ or the ‘Ram,’ and he and his chamberlains bow her up the great stair to the state apartments, whilst her carriage rumbles into the courtyard, where the ‘Exeter Fly’ is housed that performs the journey in eight days, God willing, having achieved its daily flight of twenty miles, and landed its passengers for supper and sleep. The curate is taking his pipe in the kitchen, where the Captain’s man, having hung up his master’s half-pike, is at his bacon and eggs, bragging of Ramillies and Malplaquet to the townsfolk, who have their club in the chimney-corner. The Captain is ogling the chambermaid in the wooden gallery, or bribing her to know who is the pretty young mistress that has come in the coach. The pack-horses are in the great stable, and the drivers and ostlers carousing in the tap. And in Mrs. Landlady’s bar, over a glass of strong waters, sits a gentleman of military appearance, who travels with pistols, as all

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the rest of the world does, and has a rattling gray mare in the stable which will be saddled and away with its owner half-an-hour before the 'Fly' sets out on its last day's flight. And some five miles on the road, as the 'Exeter Fly' comes jingling and creaking onwards, it will suddenly be brought to a halt by a gentleman on a gray mare, with a black vizard on his face, who thrusts a long pistol into the coach window, and bids the company to hand out their purses. . . ."

The maypole has gone; the churches are not filled on week-days; the toy-shops no longer exist; footmen do not run with links before the chariots of the nobility. Links died out when the streets were lighted with gas, the coaches have been replaced by railways, and even the steam-engine is passing as electricity slowly but surely takes its place as the motive-power of the future. The country inns have died of inanition, though the motor-car may here and there be giving a few hostelries a new lease of life, and the highwayman is as extinct as the dodo.

The city of London during the reign of

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Queen Anne multiplied its size manifold, and expanded beyond its walls, but there were still spaces on all sides — Hoxton Fields, White Conduit Street, Lamb’s Conduit Fields, Marylebone Fields; but beyond St.-Martin-le-Grand the streets were left in darkness absolute, and Temple Bar and the other city gates were closed at night.

Bloomsbury was beginning. Southampton House was there, and Bedford House, at the back of which, and overlooking the gardens, George Warrington lived in the street now known as Southampton Row. Montague House was a landmark, and in 1759 was opened as the British Museum. “There’s Montague House made into a confounded Don Saltero’s museum, with books and stuffed birds and rhinoceroses,” Lord March exclaimed at White’s in disgust. Soon the Sloane and other collections outgrew their habitation, and a new Ionic structure was erected in 1823 by Sir Robert Smirke, which is regarded as perhaps the most successful imitation of the Greek architecture in this country. The famous reading-room under

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the dome, however, was not built until half-a-century later. Steele, who, after marrying his "dear Prue," had lived in "the third house from Germaine Street, left hand of Berry Street," in St. James's, where the rent was not paid until after the landlord had put in an execution on Captain Steele's furniture, moved to a mansion in Bloomsbury Square. At this residence there was the same difficulty about the payment of rent, and it was here probably that Steele put the bailiff's men into his livery and made them wait at table. "Do I know the Mall? Do I know the Opera? Why, Bloomsbury is the very height of the *mode*," the satirical Mr. St. John assured Mrs. Steele. "'T is *rus in urbe*. You have gardens all the way to Hampstead and palaces round about you." It is almost impossible nowadays to realise that remark about the surroundings of Bloomsbury; yet when Queen's Square was built in the reign of Queen Anne — it was named in compliment to her, but the statue in the gardens is that of Queen Charlotte — much praise was bestowed upon it because of the beautiful view



VIEW OF LINCOLN'S INN  
From an old print





1100

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to the Hampstead and Highgate hills, for which reason the north side was left open! The outlook to the north is to-day confined to the immediately adjacent Guildford Street.

South of Old Bourne, or Holborn, as it is now written, was a popular quarter. Old Lord Castlewood had at one time a fine house in Lincoln's Inn Fields, nigh to the Duke's Theatre and the Portuguese Ambassador's Chapel. It was at the Duke's Playhouse that Francis, Viscount Castlewood, arranged to meet Lord Mohun before going on to sup at the “Rose” or the “Greyhound,” where they had agreed to quarrel. The play was Mr. Wycherley's “Love in a Wood.” Thackeray has mentioned:

“Mrs. Bracegirdle performed the girl's part in the comedy. . . . She was disguised as a page, and came and stood before the gentlemen as they sat on the stage, and looked over her shoulder with a pair of arch black eyes, and laughed at my Lord, and asked what ailed the gentleman from the country, and had he had bad news from Bullock Fair. Between the acts of the play the gentlemen

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crossed over and conversed freely. There were two of Lord Mohun's party, Captain Macartney in a military habit, and a gentleman in a suit of blue velvet and silver in a fair periwig, with a rich fall of point of Venice lace — my Lord the Earl of Warwick and Holland. My Lord had a paper of oranges, which he ate, and offered to the actresses, joking with them. And Mrs. Bracegirdle, when my Lord Mohun said something rude, turned on him and asked him what he did there, and whether he and his friends had come to stab anybody else, as they did poor Will Mountford."

But the play could not have been "Love in a Wood," for the disguise of a page is not worn by any of the ladies in Mr. Wycherley's comedy, and Mrs. Bracegirdle is not known ever to have sustained any part in that work, which was revived at Drury Lane in 1718, when the play-bills stated it had not been represented for thirty years.

In Thackeray's historical novels, as indeed in most of his writings, there is frequent reference to the playhouse. It will be re-

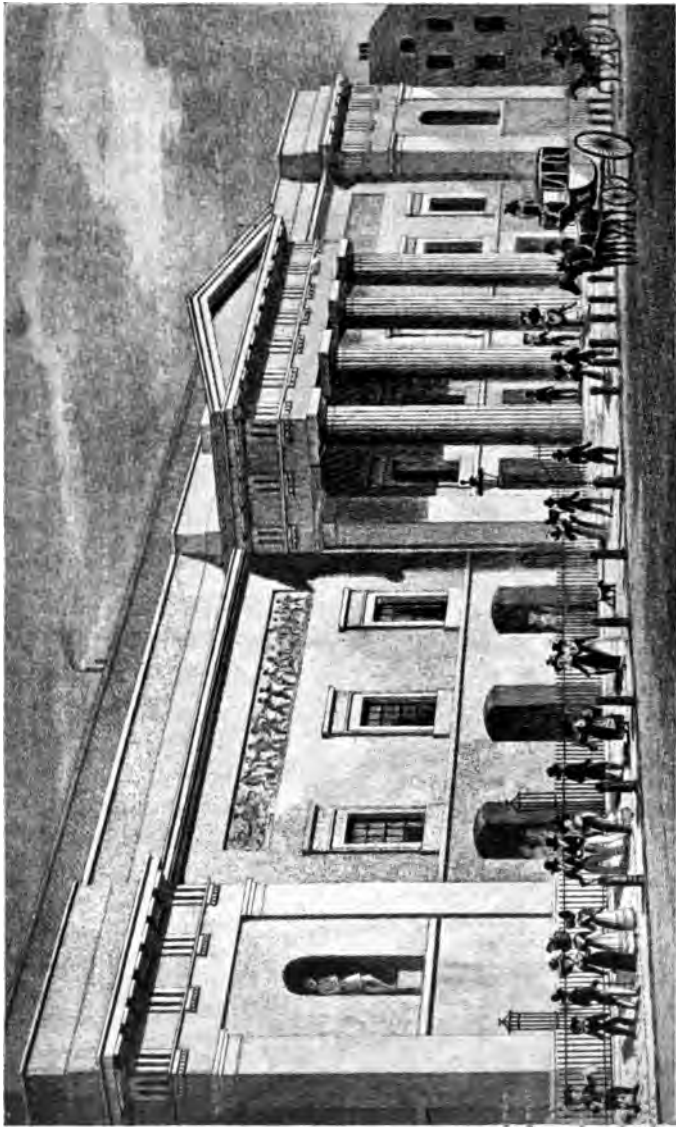
## “Esmond” and “Virginians” 189

membered that when Colonel Esmond retired from the army he devoted his leisure to the composition of a play, whereof the prompter's copy, once in the possession of Mrs. Rachel Esmond Warrington of Virginia, is docketed “The Faithful Fool: a Comedy.” It was a sentimental piece, being written by a young man deeply in love with a beautiful woman, and was admired more by Mr. (afterwards Sir Richard) Steele than by Mr. Addison. The latter was bringing out his play of “Cato” at the time, the blaze of which quite extinguished the amateur's production, which perished on the third night of its performance by their Majesties' Servants, with only half-a-dozen persons to behold its last agonies. Esmond did not put his name to the piece, which was printed as by “A Person of Quality.” Only nine copies were sold, though the famous Mr. Dennis praised it, and said it was a work of great merit; and Colonel Esmond had the whole impression burned one day in a rage by Jack Lockwood, his man.

In “The Virginians” the Warringtons and

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the Lamberts go to Covent Garden Theatre to witness a performance of the play, by the great Mr. John Home of Scotland, entitled "Douglas," in which Mr. Spranger Barry was magnificently attired as the immortal Norval, and the beautiful Mrs. Washington made all the ladies, and even the grenadiers on guard on each side of the stage, weep visibly and audibly. From his grandfather, Colonel Esmond, Mr. George Warrington inherited some literary ambitions, and his play "Carpézan" was produced with great success, with Mr. Rich, at Covent Garden. George was less fortunate with his second play, a poetical tragedy entitled "Pocohontas," produced at Drury Lane by Garrick, with O'Hagan (*né* Geoghagan) as Sir Walter Raleigh, and Mrs. Pritchard as the eponymous heroine. At the first performance, in the front boxes sat Samuel Johnson, who could not see, and Joshua Reynolds, who could not hear, and who had come good-naturedly *à deux* to form an opinion of the play. Everything went smoothly enough; but when the heroine rushed to the prison-



**THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT GARDEN**  
**From an old print**

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## “Esmond” and “Virginians” 191

er's arms, and a number of people were actually in tears, a rude fellow in the pit bawled out, “Bedad! there's the Belle Savage kissing the ‘Saracen's Head’” — the ignorant fellow not knowing that Pocohontas was the Belle Savage from which the tavern took its name.

The incident in “The Virginians” of the marriage of O'Hagan with Lady Maria was doubtless founded upon the true story of O'Brien the actor, who ran away with Lady Susan Fox Strangways, whose relations sent them to America, with an allowance of four hundred a year, settled by Lord Holland on his niece; but the daring couple eventually decided not to accept expatriation, and returned to England, where they led a happy and contented life.

Though to-day the glory of Covent Garden has faded, yet a portion of the Italian colonnade known as the Piazza remains to remind us of the time when it was one of the sights of the town. Great houses were dotted around the vast square, and there still stands a corner house — the frontage, unaltered through



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many generations, may be seen in Hogarth's "Morning" — which after the Restoration was occupied by Sir Kenelm Digby, later by Admiral the Earl of Orford, and eventually by Evans's famous tavern. Covent Garden was one of the great centres of the taverns and coffee-houses which played so great a part in the social life of the eighteenth century, the better class of which were the predecessors of the clubs of to-day, and the less reputable, and those frequented by the lower orders, of the modern public-houses. Each and all, however, were social exchanges for news, which but for these meeting-places would have travelled slowly in an era when newspapers were, to all intents and purposes, non-existent. Button, once the servant of that Countess of Warwick whom Addison married, set up his coffee-house on the south side of Russell Street, two doors from Covent Garden, and it was here that the famous Mr. Congreve came, and the still greater Dean Swift. Mr. Addison set up his headquarters at Button's, and was usually to be found there, surrounded by "Dick" Steele, Bud-

## “Esmond” and “Virginians” 193

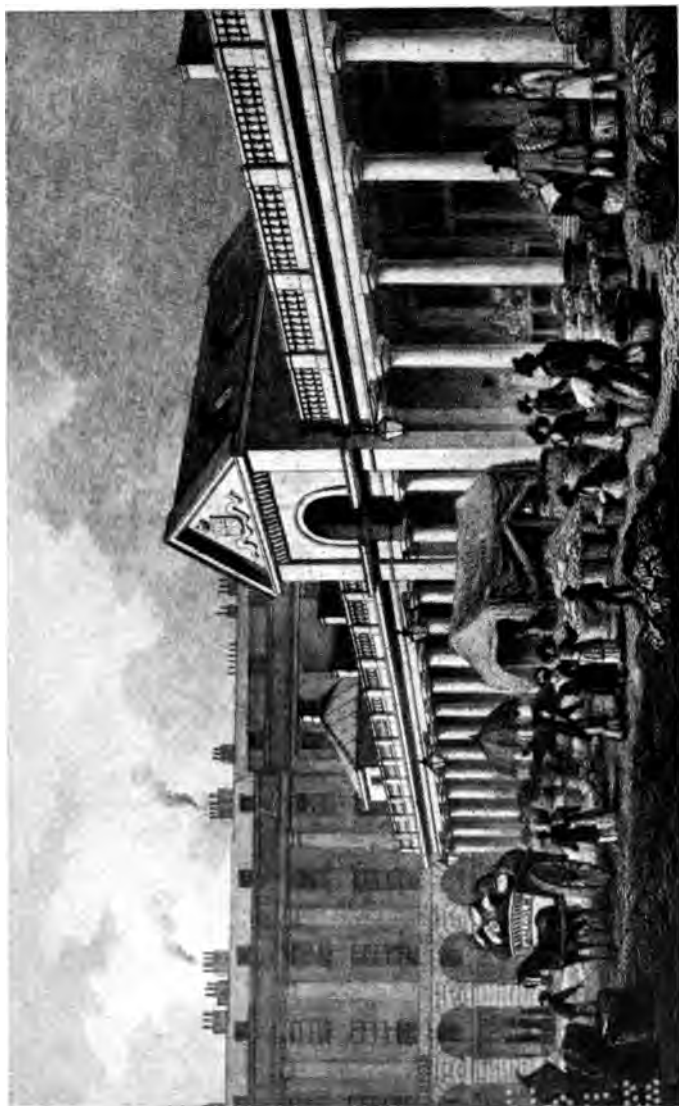
gell, Tickell, Phillips, and Carey, the principal officers of his court. There was a time when Mr. Alexander Pope sat at the feet of the author of “Cato,” but the latter could “bear, like the Turk, no brother near the throne,” and Mr. Pope withdrew from that society.

It was on the west side of Bow Street (where Lord Mohun lived in lodgings), at the corner of Russell Street, that the Rose Tavern stood. This had a singularly bad reputation, and a room in the hostelry, showing a midnight debauch, was depicted in the third print of “The Rake’s Progress.” Subsequently it was rechristened Will’s, and its character improved. Nowhere was the smoking more constant than at Will’s, that celebrated house, sacred to polite letters. “Under no roof was a greater variety of figures to be seen,” Macaulay has recorded. “There were earls in stars and garters, clergymen in cassocks and bands, pert Templars, sheepish lads from the universities, translators and index-makers in ragged coats of frieze.” Old Dryden went there and sat for hours together in a room on the first floor, where the com-

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pany assembled, and *beaux* contended together for the honour to be allowed to take a pinch out of the great man's snuff-box. Tom's was a resort frequented by Dr. Johnson, Reynolds, and Garrick; and Offley's, in Henrietta Street, was visited by all who cared to listen to high-class singing. Not far off was the old Devil Tavern, near Temple Bar, where Ben Jonson had reigned supreme among the wits and gallants of his day. The "Greyhound" (in Charing Cross, where my Lord Castlewood stayed) and Lockit's (in Spring Gardens) were also popular resorts.

Farther west were the "George" and the "Star and Garter," "over against the gate of the palace in Pall Mall;" and in St. James's Street the "Cocoa-Tree" and White's Chocolate-House. White's Club, frequented by the fashionable men about town, had its home at the chocolate-house of the same name. Close by the corner of St. James's Street which faces that part of St. James's Palace which stands between the Colour Court and the Ambassador's Court was the



THE NORTH WEST FAÇADE OF THE NEW COVENT GARDEN MARKET

From an old print

See page 102

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St. James's Coffee-House, where fashionable wits forgathered, and Swift wrote so many of his letters to sweet, womanly Stella. “He never sends away a letter to her but he begins a new one in the same day. He can't bear to let go her little hand, as it were.” Next door, in later days, Thackeray lived for two years.

Pall Mall, perhaps owing to its proximity to St. James's Palace, has always been a favourite street of “the quality:”

“In town let me live, in town let me die,  
For in truth I can't relish the country, not I;  
If one must have a villa in summer to dwell,  
Oh, give me the sweet shady side of Pall Mall!”

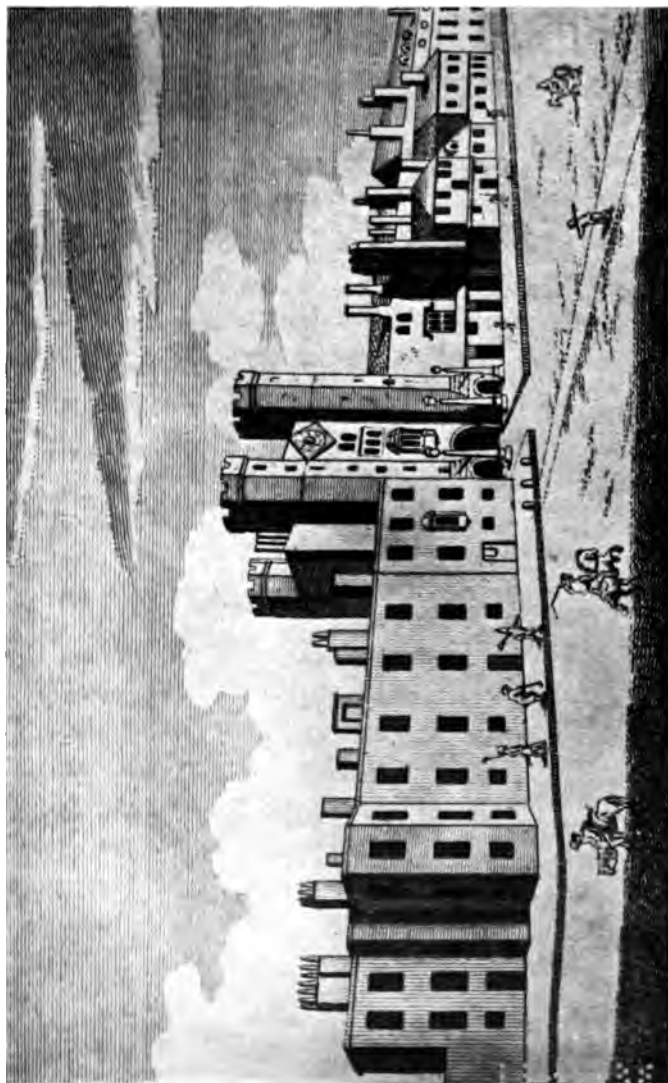
“I lodged in the street called Pall Mall, the ordinary residence of strangers because of its vicinity to the Queen's Palace, the Park, the Parliament House, the theatres, and the chocolate and coffee houses, where the best company frequent,” says Defoe. “If you would know our manner of living, 't is thus: we rise by nine, and those that frequent great men's *levées* find entertainment at them till eleven, or, as at Holland, go to

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tea-tables. About twelve, the *beau monde* assembles in several coffee and chocolate houses, the best of which are the Cocoa-Tree or White's Chocolate House; the St. James's, the Smyrna, Mr. Crockford's and the British coffee-houses; and all these so near one another that in less than one hour you can see the company of them all."

Thackeray also has written of Pall Mall and its memories, which were especially dear to him. He lived at the southwest corner of St. James's Street, and one may well believe that as he walked through the famous street he peopled it with the celebrated folk who had lived and walked and talked there.

"I remember peeping through the colonnade at Carlton House, and seeing the abode of the great Prince Regent. I can see yet the Guards pacing before the gate of the palace. The palace! What palace? The palace exists no more than the palace of Nebuchadnezzar. It is but a name now. Where be the sentries who used to salute as the Royal chariots drove in and out? The



VIEW OF ST. JAMES'S PALACE  
From an old print



81 400

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chariots, with the kings inside, have driven to the realms of Pluto; the tall Guards have marched into darkness, and the echoes of their drums are rolling in Hades. Where the palace once stood a hundred little children are paddling up and down the steps to St. James's Park. A score of grave gentlemen are taking their tea at the Athenæum Club; as many grisly warriors are garrisoning the United Service Club opposite. Pall Mall is the great social Exchange of London now — the mart of news, of politics, of scandal, of rumour — the English Forum, so to speak, where men discuss the last despatch from the Crimea, the last speech of Lord Derby, the next move of Lord John. And, now and then, to a few antiquarians whose thoughts are with the past rather than with the present, it is a memorial of old times and old people, and Pall Mall is our Palmyra. Look! About this spot Tom of Ten Thousand was killed by Königsmarck's gang. In that great red house Gainsborough lived, and Culloden Cumberland, George III.'s uncle. Yonder is Sarah Marlborough's palace,

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just as it stood when that termagant occupied it. At 25 Walter Scott used to live; at the house now 79, and occupied by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, resided Mistress Eleanor Gwynn, comedian. How often has Queen Caroline's chair issued from under yonder arch! All the men of the Georges have passed up and down the street. It has seen Walpole's chariot and Chatham's sedan; and Fox, Gibbon, Sheridan, on their way to Brooks's; and stately William Pitt, stalking on the arm of Dundas; and Hanger and Tom Sheridan reeling out of Raggett's; and Byron limping into Wattier's; and Swift striding out of Bury Street; and Mr. Addison and Dick Steele, both perhaps a little the better for liquor; and the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York clattering over the pavement; and Johnson counting the posts along the street, after dawdling before Dodsley's window; and Horry Walpole bobbing into his carriage with a gimcrack just bought at Christie's; and George Selwyn sauntering into White's."

## “Esmond” and “Virginians” 199

Pall Mall is now as much as ever the great social Exchange of London, and if it now contains few historic mansions, it contains some of the best-known clubs in the world; and a man who is acquainted with those whom not to know argues yourself unknown may meet more famous people in an hour in that street than in a week in any other thoroughfare.

Dick Steele and Joseph Addison, just mentioned in the passage quoted from “The Four Georges,” appear frequently in “Esmond.” Steele met Esmond for the first time when Harry was a child at Castlewood and the author was a soldier in the Life Guards. It was years later when Thackeray’s hero met the gentleman whom Pope satirised as Atticus. Esmond, after dining with Dick Steele at the Guard-table at St. James’s Palace, and having left early one sunny afternoon, when his host had by chance a sober fit, in walking down the street was surprised when his companion suddenly left his arm and ran after a gentleman who was poring over a folio volume at the book-shop

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near to St. James's Church. The tall, fair man in a snuff-coloured suit, with a plain sword, very sober and almost shabby in appearance — at least, when compared with Captain Steele, who loved to adorn his jolly, round person with the finest of clothes, and shone in scarlet and gold lace — was no less a person than Mr. Joseph Addison, who took them both to his lodgings in the Haymarket, and gave them a bottle of wine, invited Harry to give him some particulars of Marlborough's action for use in "The Campaign," upon the writing of which he was then engaged, and subsequently read them the portion already composed.

At the Court end of the town, north of St. James's, lies Mayfair. There, in Bond Street, stayed Mr. Harry Warrington in lodgings, the landlord of which was Mr. Ruff, the head-waiter and aide-de-camp of Mr. Mackreth, the proprietor of White's Club. It was by the advice of his fashionable friends who introduced him to White's that the "Fortunate Youth" moved westward from his quarters at the Bedford



**THE HALL, CARLTON HOUSE**

**From an old print**

*See page 106*

8830

**“Esmond” and “Virginians” 201**

Coffee-House in Covent Garden. In Hill Street, close by, lived Harry's uncle, Sir Miles Warrington; and also the best friends a man could desire, Major-General and Mrs. Lambert, and their children, Theo and Hetty. In Hill Street for a time stayed Mr. Redmond Barry, afterwards known as Mr. Barry Lyndon, when he was forcing his addresses upon Honoria, Countess of Lyndon, who had a house in Berkeley Square. Hill Street figures largely in many of Thackeray's books, and it is the great Gaunt Street of “Vanity Fair,” where lived Lady Gaunt's mother and Sir Pitt Crawley, to the latter of whom Becky went as governess. Who does not remember her arrival there from the Sedleys' house in Russell Square? “Having passed through Shiverley Square into Great Gaunt Street, the carriage at length stopped at a tall, gloomy house between two other tall, gloomy houses, each with the hatchment over the middle drawing-room window; as is the custom of houses in Great Gaunt Street, in which gloomy locality death seems to reign perpetual.” Shiverley Square,



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also called by Thackeray Gaunt Square, is Berkeley Square, in which is situated Gaunt House, once the residence of the Most Honourable George Gustavus, Marquis of Steyne. "Gaunt House occupies nearly a side of the Square. The remaining three sides are composed of mansions that have passed away into dowagerism — tall, dark houses, with window-frames of stone, or picked out in a lighter red. Little light seems to be behind those lean, comfortless casements now; and hospitality to have passed away from their doors as much as the laced lacqueys and link-boys of old times who used to put out their torches with the blank iron extinguishers that still flank the lamp over the steps. The Square has a dreary look; nor is my Lord Steyne's palace less dreary. All I have ever seen of it is the vast wall in front, with the rustic columns at the great gates, through which an old porter peers, with a fat and gloomy red face, and over the wall the garret and bedroom windows, and the chimney out of which there seldom comes any smoke now."

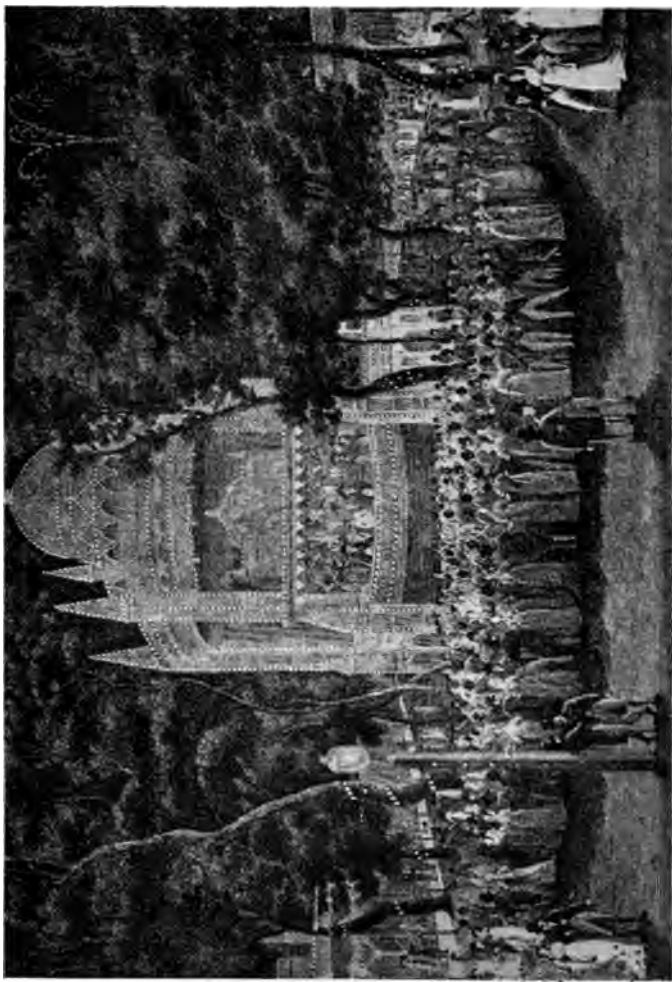
“Esmond” and “Virginians” 203

In Clarges Street Barry Lyndon's father lived in the day of his splendour; and there, too, Beatrix, Baroness Bernstein (*née* Esmond), held her card-parties, her Wednesday and Sunday evenings, save during the short season when Ranelagh was open on a Sunday, when the desolate old woman sat alone, waiting hopelessly for the scapegrace nephew that her battered heart had learned to love. The whirligig of time had brought its revenge, and the once beautiful Beatrix, who scorned the love of honest men, who schemed to become a duchess, who intrigued to marry a prince, and contented herself with becoming his mistress — the lovely, wayward girl — was left in her old age to hunger for love that was now denied her. We know she was heartless, we know she was cruel, but, such is man's nature, he forgives her all because of her marvellous charm, and gives her the pity that, to her credit be it said, she would have refused with scorn.

Ranelagh, with its Rotunda, was a great resort alike of the *monde* and the *demi-monde*. Harry Warrington took his brother there,

## 204 Some Aspects of Thackeray

and heard for the first time a full orchestra and a piece of Mr. Handel's satisfactorily performed. Vauxhall Gardens, with its "twenty thousand *additional* lamps" lighted every night, was quite as well known, and in later years was honoured by a visit from Mr. Arthur Pendennis of the Temple (the author of "Walter Lorraine," a novel that enjoyed some favour in its time). There he was fortunate enough to rescue beauty in distress in the person of Miss Fanny Bolton, who with her mother kept the lodge at Shepherd's Inn. Marylebone Gardens was another place of amusement; and there was also an entertainment at Sadler's Wells, Islington, where at one time the attractions were "the most singular kind of diversion on eight hand-bells by Mr. Franklin, as well as the surprising performances of Signora Catterina." Gaming, however, was the fashionable enjoyment of the upper classes. Those who were fond of books read them in secret, for all the world as if reading were a vice. "Books! Prithee, don't talk to me about books," said Sarah, Duchess of Marl-



VAUXHALL ON A GALA NIGHT  
From an old print

1701

## “Esmond” and “Virginians” 205

borough. “The only books I know are men and cards.” The king in state played hazard with the nobility on Twelfth-Day for the benefit of the groom-porter, and even clergymen did not look unkindly at the practice. Gentlemen lost and won thousands at a sitting: it is said that Lord Steyne won his marquisate at the gaming-table. Many after running through their patrimony found their way to the sponging-houses in Cursitor Street, *en route* to the debtors’ prisons of the Fleet, King’s Bench, and the Marshalsea. Some of the earthenware pots who tried to go down-stream with the iron pots eventually found themselves at Newgate or at Tyburn. An admirable picture of the gambling set may be found in the earlier part of “The Virginians,” and, for those who prefer history at first hand, in the letters of George Selwyn and Horace Walpole.

The western boundary of Mayfair is Hyde Park. This was the scene of many duels. The Duke of Grafton went out in 1685, and killed the Hon. John Talbot; and in the eighteenth century John Wilkes, Lord Thurs-

## 206 Some Aspects of Thackeray

ton, Charles James Fox, Colonel Fullerton, and many others took the ground. In 1712 the Duke of Hamilton met Lord Mohun (Charles, not Henry, as Thackeray christened him). They fought near Price's Lodge just before sunset, and both died on the ground. The Duke killed his antagonist, but there is some doubt as to how the Duke was killed. It was said at the time that Colonel Macartney, Mohun's second, came up after Mohun fell and stabbed the Duke in the back. Thackeray was wrong in saying in "Esmond," where the story of the duel is recorded at length, that Macartney fled and never returned to England; for though he fled, after four years he returned, was tried by the Court of King's Bench, and acquitted. Readers of "Esmond" will remember that the duel, which arose out of a quarrel concerning property, took place on the eve of the marriage of the Duke to Beatrix Castlewood. Lord Mohun was a notorious character. In earlier days he had been concerned with Lord Warwick, the husband of the countess whom Addison married, in the

“Esmond” and “Virginians” 207

murder of Will Mountford the comedian, and for this offence the noblemen were tried by their peers and acquitted. Thackeray makes Mohun kill Lord Castlewood in a duel in Leicester Fields, now Leicester Square, where, on the north side, stood Leicester House, built early in the seventeenth century by the then Earl of Leicester. Leicester House was purchased for George II. when Prince of Wales, and it was not until 1766 that it ceased to be a royal residence. The Empire Theatre now occupies the site of the mansion. A third spot favoured by duellists was the ground behind Montague House, and here the father of Barry Lyndon pinked Count Tiercelin.

Much of the action of “Esmond” took place in Kensington. “In those days,” Lady Ritchie, the author of the charming “Old Kensington,” says, “the hawthorn spread across the fields and market-gardens that lay between Kensington and the river. Lanes ran to Chelsea, to Fulham, to North End, where Richardson once lived and wrote in his garden-house. The mist of the great



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city hid the horizon and dulled the sound of the advancing multitude; but close at hand . . . were country corners untouched — blossoms instead of bricks in spring-time, summer shade in summer.” When the father of Rachel, Lady Castlewood, died and left her some three thousand pounds, with this little fortune she was enabled, when her daughter’s turn came as Maid of Honour at Court, to come to London, where she took a small, genteel house at Kensington Square. This was adjacent to the Court. The red-brick Kensington Palace, built by William and Mary, was the social headquarters of the Court, though State ceremonies still took place at St. James’s Palace, and in summer Majesty migrated to Hampton Court or Windsor.

— Kensington Square was commenced in the reign of James II., and was finished towards the close of that of William. In the time of Queen Anne and the first Georges it was very fashionable; and, owing to its proximity to the Court, lodgings were so much in demand that an ambassador, a bishop, and a physi-



VIEW OF KENSINGTON PALACE  
From an old Print

MR01

## “Esmond” and “Virginians” 209

cian occupied apartments in the same house. Talleyrand lived there, and Mrs. Scurlock, whom Steele married, and Addison before his grand, miserable marriage with the *chatelaine* of Holland House; while Nos. 10 and 11 were reserved for the Maids of Honour who could not be housed at the palace.

When Lady Castlewood moved to Kensington, Esmond, so as to be near his “dear lady,” took lodgings at Knightsbridge (in those days spelt Knyghtbrigg), then a hamlet in the parishes of Chelsea, Kensington, and St. Margaret’s, Westminster, “between London and Kensington, and overlooking the gardens.” It was some distance from London, and so late as 1740 the Bristol mail was robbed there. The house in Kensington Square had been in the early years of the eighteenth century the residence of the Marquis of Powis, who accompanied James II. into exile, and by the grateful monarch was created Duke of Powis, a title now extinct. It then had stabling and a cottage attached to it. Upon the site of the cottage

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was built the house in Young Street, "Our Street," where Thackeray lived from 1846 to 1853, and where he wrote "Vanity Fair," "Pendennis," and "Esmond." The old "Greyhound," since rebuilt, with its memories of Pope, Addison, and Macaulay, was at the corner opposite. It was from here that on an eventful night Esmond watched the door of Lady Castlewood's residence lest the Prince should escape from it. It was at the "King's Arms," Kensington, that Esmond enrolled a little army of gentlemen to enforce the Pretender's claim to the throne. They assembled, in parties of two and three, to the number of fifty-three, and his Grace the Duke of Ormonde was to take command. But when the moment for action came the Prince was absent at Castlewood paying dishonourable court to Beatrix. So, according to Thackeray, ended the conspiracy which might have altered the history of England by restoring the Stuarts to the throne.

It was to Lady Castlewood's that the Pretender came *incognito*, and from there

was taken to see his sister the Queen, when she and her favourite lady-in-waiting were taking the air in the cedar-walk behind the new banqueting-hall; and it was there that Esmond warned the Prince that if his Royal Highness harboured thoughts of dishonour towards Beatrix, his faithful servant would call in the watchman and give him up. The windows of the house were open both towards the gardens and the square; in the square was the watchman, who would be glad to secure the five hundred pounds set on the Pretender's head, and in the gardens was the palace where the Prince might hope to reign. His Royal Highness hesitated, and then pledged his word. He broke faith and followed Beatrix to Castlewood, and by so doing lost a throne. It was also at the house in Kensington Square that the Duke of Hamilton wooed and won Beatrix; and it was in the drawing-room that he objected to Esmond, whom he believed to be a bastard, giving his future wife a grand parure of diamonds as a wedding-gift. This led up to one of the greatest scenes in

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the book — a scene which shows Thackeray's genius at its best — when Lady Castlewood, pale, trembling, and indignant, tells the story of the noble gentleman's renunciation:

“My daughter may receive presents from the head of our house; my daughter may thankfully take kindness from her father's, her mother's, her brother's dearest friend; and be grateful for one more benefit besides the thousands that we owe him. What is a string of diamonds compared to that affection he has given us — our dearest preserver and benefactor? We owe him, not only Frank's life, but our all — yes, our all. The title we bear is his, if he would claim it. 'Tis we who have no right to our name; not he, that's too great for it. He sacrificed his name at my dying lord's bedside — sacrificed it to my orphan children; gave up rank and honour because he loved us so nobly. His father was Viscount of Castlewood and Marquis of Esmond before him; and he is his father's lawful son and true heir, and we are the recipients of his bounty, and he

**“Esmond” and “Virginians” 213**

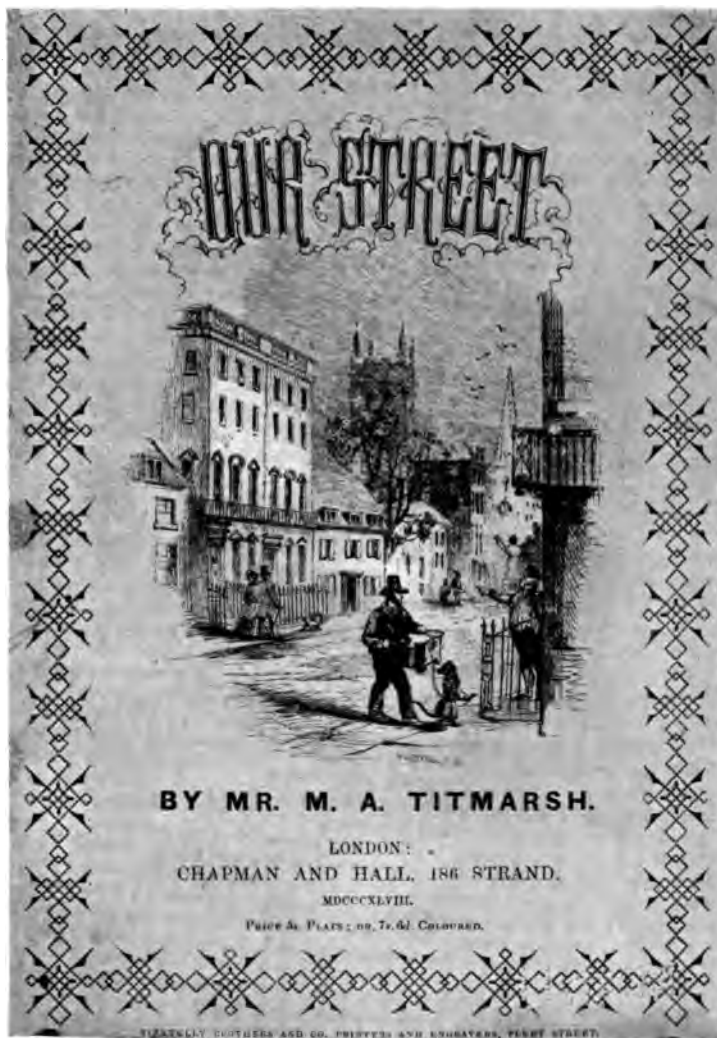
the chief of a house that's as old as your own. And if he is content to forego his name that my child may bear it, we love him and honour him and bless him, under whatever name he bears.”



## CHAPTER IX

### *Some Editions of Thackeray*

**B**EFORE the dawn of the nineteenth century when newspapers were few and magazines practically unknown, the young man usually began his literary career by issuing a volume containing the first fruits of his work. Since then, although now and again a venturesome author may in the same way make a bid for fame, it has been more usual for the aspirant to start as a contributor to some periodical. It was in this way that Thackeray commenced author. When he was at Trinity College, Cambridge, he wrote for two little papers edited and written by undergraduates: the first was *The Snob, A Literary and Scientific Journal* NOT Conducted by Members of the University, which was published weekly, from April 9 to June 18, 1829; and the second, *The*



REDUCED FACSIMILE OF THE COVER TO THE FIRST  
EDITION OF "OUR STREET"

From the copy owned by Major William H. Lambert

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## Some Editions of Thackeray 215

*Gownsmen* (formerly called *The Snob*) *A Literary and Scientific Journal now Conducted by Members of the University*, which ran from November 9, 1829, to February 25, 1830. *The Snob* was printed on papers of different colours; and Nos. 1 to 6 were marked 5th edition, Nos. 2 and 9 3rd edition, Nos. 3, 4, 5, 7, 4th edition, and Nos. 8, 10, 11, 2nd edition. *The Gownsmen* was printed on white paper, and the editor of that little periodical abandoned the feeble humour of the editor of the earlier one and did not mark the various issues as being of any particular edition. To this paper Thackeray contributed the often reprinted burlesque, "Timbuctoo," and also a series of rather poor imitations of Theodore Hook's "Ramsbottom Papers," as well as a parody of Haynes Baily's "I'd be a Butterfly." To *The Gownsmen*, when the numbers were bound up in book form, he contributed a dedication to the Proctors: —

"Whose taste it is our privilege to follow,  
Whose virtue it is our duty to imitate,  
And whose business it is our interest to avoid."

## 216 Some Aspects of Thackeray

Though Thackeray's contributions to *The Snob* and *The Gownsmen* have little or no literary value and are interesting only as curiosities, still the papers are much sought after by collectors, and a copy of the two bound together realised, at an auction sale a few years ago, the fancy price of £132. After Thackeray left the University, his thoughts turned to literature, and in a more or less amateurish spirit he became first a contributor and then editor and proprietor of a weekly paper grandiloquently called *The National Standard and Journal of Literature, Science, Music, Theatricals, and the Fine Arts*, which name was subsequently altered to *The National Standard and Literary Representative*. To this Thackeray contributed many articles, sketches, poems, and translations, not all of which have yet been identified, though many of them have been re-printed in Mr. W. T. Spencer's volume. Copies of this newspaper rarely come into the market, and the same may be said of another newspaper with which he was subsequently connected, *The Constitutional and*

## Some Editions of Thackeray 217

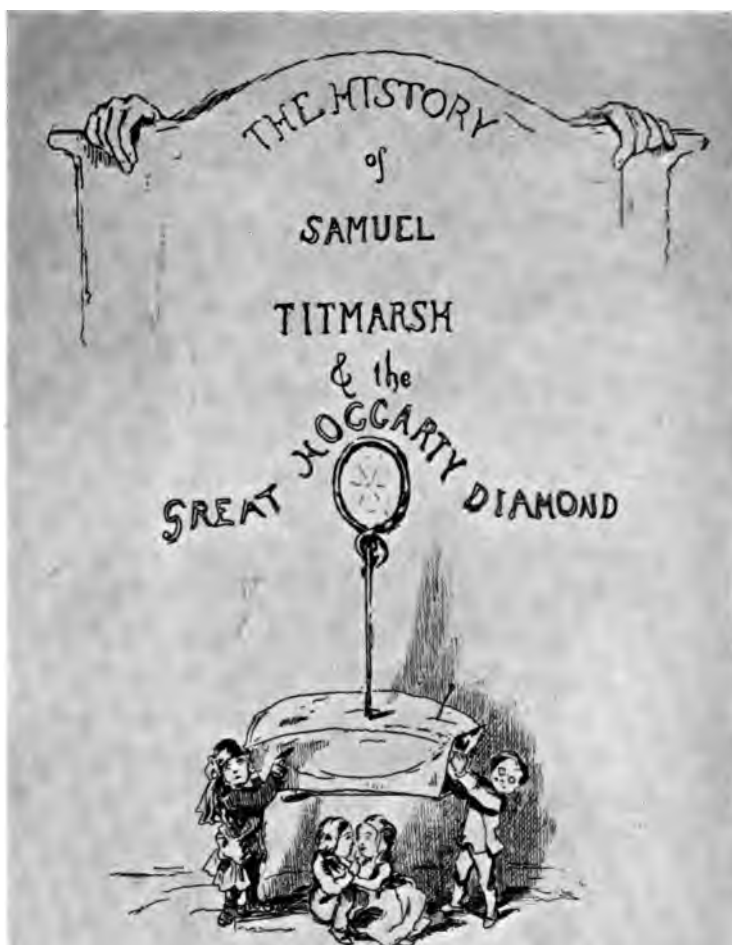
*Public Ledger*, to which he contributed Paris correspondence which may also be read by the curious in Mr. Spencer's volume.

More interesting than these, and at least as valuable from the pecuniary point of view, are the first books with which Thackeray was connected. In 1836 he was in Paris and there saw a ballet entitled "Flore et Zéphyr." This provided him with a subject for a series of caricatures which he published in book form through Mitchell's library in London, and Rittner and Goupil in Paris. The book bore the title: "Flore et Zéphyr, Ballet Mythologique Dédié à (Sketch of Flore) par Théophile Wagstaffe."

This little brochure, which consisted of eight plates and wrapper with vignette, lithographed by Edward Morton, is perhaps the rarest of all Thackeray's earliest works, and in 1896 a copy with the plates backed with linen and one wrapper missing, was sold for £55. Two other little books, "King Glumpus" and "The Exquisites," privately printed respectively in 1837 and 1839, were for many years attributed to Thackeray.

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It has since transpired, however, that John Borrow was responsible for the letterpress and that Thackeray contributed only the illustrations, of which there are three in "King Glumpus" and four in "The Exquisites." Copies of these are very scarce, and the market price of "King Glumpus" seems to be about £150, while a copy of "The Exquisites" with coloured plates (the only known copy) realised £85, and another with uncoloured plates £58. At least as rare as these is the little volume, published by Carey and Hart, of Philadelphia, 1838, containing "The Yellowplush Correspondence," though what its money value is it is impossible to say, since no copy has been offered for sale for many years. It was an unauthorised edition, published two years before the "Correspondence" was re-printed in England. There is one point to note about the volume, and that is that the first page is numbered 13 in all known copies; the assumption being that it was intended to introduce the "Correspondence" with a preface. Another early edition was that issued



LONDON:

*Bradbury & Evans, M. Dawson, Print.*

1840.



REDUCED FACSIMILE OF THE TITLE PAGE TO THE FIRST  
EDITION OF "THE HISTORY OF SAMUEL TITMARSH  
& THE GREAT HOGGARTY DIAMOND"

From the copy owned by Major William H. Lambert



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## Some Editions of Thackeray 219

in 1839 containing the "Reminiscences of Major Gahagan" which had first appeared in the *New Monthly Magazine*. Of this, no copy is known to exist, but Mr. Frederick S. Dickson gives it a place in his Bibliography, because in the preface to "Comic Tales and Sketches" the following passage appears: — "Mr. Yellowplush's Memoirs' . . . exclusively popular in America, where they have been re-printed more than once with 'Major Gahagan's Reminiscences' from the *New Monthly Magazine* and received by our American brethren with similar piratical honours."

The first book of Thackeray's published under his own auspices was "The Paris Sketch Book" (1840), a collection of tales and articles many of which had already appeared in the reviews and magazines; and in the same year appeared his essay "On the Genius of George Cruikshank," published with numerous illustrations of his works from the *Westminster Review*. In 1841 was issued in a grey pictorial cover "The Second Funeral of Napoleon in Three Letters to Miss Smith of London. And the Chronicle of the Drum."

## 220 Some Aspects of Thackeray

This book was a great failure as a publishing speculation, as the author's correspondence shows, and copies of it are so very rarely to be met with that a good example recently changed hands at £40. The first edition was reprinted in facsimile in 1896, and distributed as a gift by certain Philadelphian and Chicagoan Sunday newspapers. In the same year as "The Second Funeral of Napoleon" appeared "Comic Tales and Sketches," in which were printed the "Yellowplush Correspondence" and "Major Gahagan," with new illustrations taking the place of those that had accompanied the original issue of this series in the magazines.

Thackeray's next publications in book form were "The Irish Sketch Book" (1843), and "Notes of a Journey from Cornhill to Grand Cairo." The latter appeared in 1846, the year in which was published the first of the Christmas-Books, "Mrs. Perkins's Ball," which was followed in successive years by "Our Street," "Dr. Birch and his Young Friends," "Rebecca and Rowena" (with illustrations by Richard Doyle) and "The

## Some Editions of Thackeray 221

Kickleburys on the Rhine" in 1850. A second edition of "The Kickleburys on the Rhine" was called for early in 1851, and it is more valuable than the original issue because it contains the famous preface, "An Essay to Thunder and Small Beer," which was a reply to the *Times* criticism of the little book.

It was in January, 1847, that the first monthly part of "Vanity Fair" appeared in the wellknown yellow pictorial wrapper, and month by month the publication was continued until the double number brought it to a close in July, 1848, immediately after which the novel was reissued in book form. The issue in parts is, of course, the most valuable of all editions and a perfect copy recently fetched £100. This, like the first edition, contains a wood-cut of the Marquis of Steyne, which was deleted or suppressed in subsequent re-issues of the book during the lifetime of the author. The reason for the absence of this wood-cut has never been agreed upon by the bibliographers, but it is usually asserted that the plate was removed

## 222 Some Aspects of Thackeray

because of the likeness of the fictitious character to a certain eminently disreputable nobleman not long deceased.

"Pendennis," "The Newcomes," and "The Virginians" also appeared in monthly parts, and these in good condition are not easily obtainable. These novels, too, were immediately after their issue in parts published in book form in England and America. "Esmond," however, appeared for the first time in the three-volume edition, and the original issue was printed in the obsolete type of the reign of Queen Anne.

As Thackeray's fame advanced, his miscellanies attracted more and more attention, especially in America. In 1846 "Jeames's Diary" was published in New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, and in 1848 "The Great Hoggarty Diamond" was brought out by Harpers in New York. Thackeray himself, in the same year, issued in London, "The Snobs of England" from *Punch*, under the title of "The Book of Snobs;" omitting, however, certain chapters because, so the Author's note runs, "on re-perusing these



REDUCED FACSIMILE OF THE COVER TO THE FIRST  
EDITION OF "DOCTOR BIRCH AND HIS YOUNG  
FRIENDS "

From the copy owned by Major William H. Lambert

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## Some Editions of Thackeray 223

papers, I have found them so stupid, so personal, so snobbish, in a word." "The Great Hoggarty Diamond" made its first official appearance in book form, revised by the author, and published by Messrs. Bradbury and Evans, in 1849. It contained nine plates, and has the additional adornment of a pictorial title-page, all printed for the first time.

The first collection of Thackeray's "Miscellanies" was made by Baron Tauchnitz in his collection of "British Authors." The first volume was issued in 1849, the eighth and last, in 1857. Thackeray's fame was even greater in America than in England, and when it was announced that he would visit the United States as a lecturer, Messrs. Appleton and Company seized the opportunity to issue a collection of his works during 1852 and 1853. To the last of these volumes "Mr. Brown's Letters to a Young Man about Town," Thackeray contributed a preface. It was this collection of reprints that formed the basis of the first authorised collection of "Miscellanies" published by Brad-



## **224 Some Aspects of Thackeray**

bury and Evans, from 1855 to 1857. These were issued in yellow paper covers and were also collected and bound up in four volumes. In these, "Barry Lyndon" was first reprinted and the satire was revised by the author, who rarely reissued any of his works without carefully re-reading and making such changes as seemed to him advisable.

## CHAPTER X

### *Thackeray and Dickens*

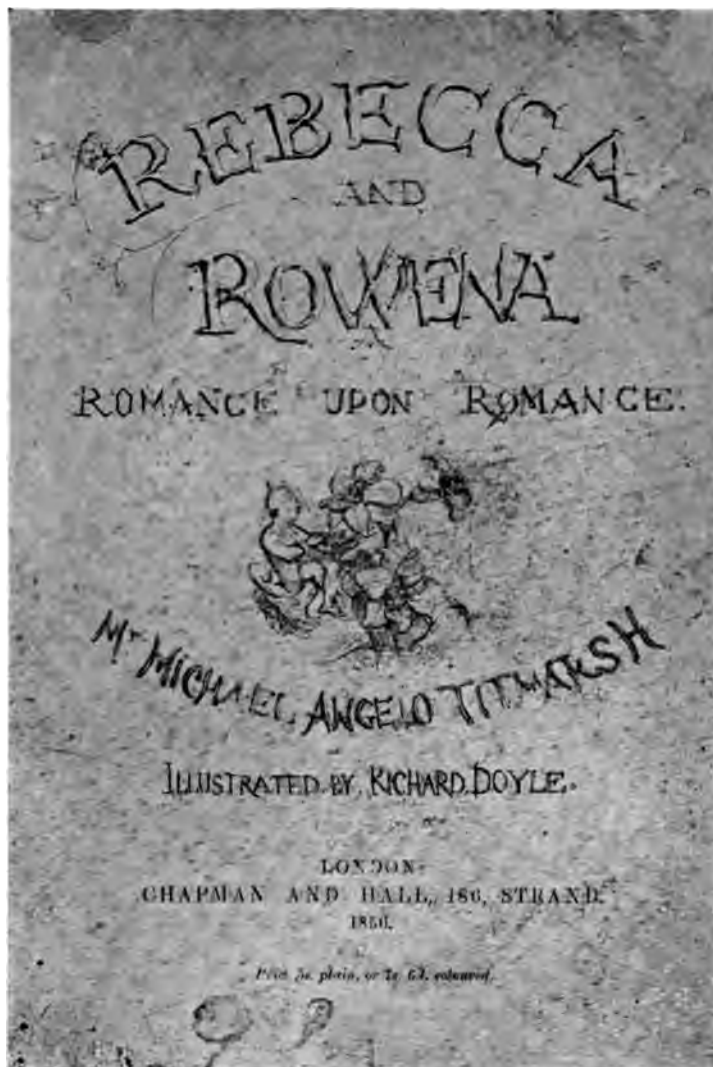
THE first meeting of these two great writers took place early in 1836. "Pickwick" was being published in monthly parts, and Robert Seymour, who invented the original design of Mr. Pickwick, after having completed the drawings for the first two or three numbers, had committed suicide. Another artist was wanted immediately, and Thackeray volunteered for the post, but his offer was declined, as already described.

Thackeray was never tired of paying tribute, private and public, to the works of his contemporaries. He was outspoken in praise of Cruikshank and Leech, who, in some measure, might be regarded as his rivals in comic portraiture. "What would *Punch* be without Leech's pictures?" he wrote in an article which not unnaturally

## 226 Some Aspects of Thackeray

annoyed the other contributors. And in 1863, a few months before his death, when Cruikshank was exhibiting his works, anxious to render what help he could to an old friend, "kind Thackeray came with his grave face, and looked through the little gallery, and went off to write one of his charming essays," which duly appeared in the *Times*.

He wrote with appreciation, not too strictly critical, of Macaulay and Washington Irving; of Hood (whose "Song of the Shirt" he pronounced the finest lyric ever written), of Lever, and of Charlotte Brontë. Even Bulwer Lytton, whom with caustic humour he had attacked in "The Yellowplush Papers," he praised for the example he set to other authors by being "thoroughly literate;" and, speaking at the Royal Literary Fund dinner in 1852, he eulogised Disraeli, whose "Coningsby" he had reviewed in the *Pictorial Times*, and afterwards had so amusingly parodied in *Punch* — a parody which the victim amply avenged, when in "Endymion" he wrote about "Sainte-



REDUCED FACSIMILE OF THE COVER TO THE FIRST  
EDITION OF "REBECCA AND ROWENA"

From the copy owned by Major William H. Lambert

1000

Barbe" and "Topsy-Turvy" (Thackeray and "Vanity Fair"). It is not generally known that Thackeray wanted to parody both Dickens and himself, but the proprietors of *Punch* declined to accept a parody of Dickens, and so both skits remained unwritten. When Thackeray, ill in bed, read "The Idylls of the King," he wrote to the poet: "Oh! I must write to him now for this pleasure, this delight, this splendour of happiness which I have been enjoying;" and when Tennyson's "Grandmother" appeared in *Once a Week*: "I wish I could have got that poem for the *Cornhill*, I would have paid fifty pounds for it," the great novelist exclaimed: "But I would have given five hundred pounds to have been able to write it." He revered "the great old Goethe," and his enthusiasm was thoroughly aroused by the works of Dumas.

Though Thackeray thought Dumas greater than Scott, yet for the latter he felt much admiration and even reverence. When a popular novelist one day justified himself

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for something he had written by urging that Scott had written it also, Thackeray replied: "I do not think that it becomes either you or me to speak of Sir Walter Scott as if we were his equals. Such men as you or I should take off our hats at the very mention of his name."

Thackeray was never so happy as when he could pay a compliment to his friends in a book. "The young Aga came for a pair of shoes; his contortions were so delightful as he tried them on that I remained with great pleasure, wishing for Leech to be at hand to sketch his lordship and his fat mamma, who sat on the counter," he wrote in "From Cornhill to Grand Cairo." And in the same volume, a little further on: "You can't put down in prose that delicious episode of natural poetry" ("The Bay of Glaucus"); "it ought to be done in a symphony, full of sweet strains of clear iambics, such as Milnes knows how to write." In one of his latest novels, "The Adventures of Philip," he concluded a chapter: "There was a pretty group for the children to see,

## Thackeray and Dickens 229

and Mr. Walker to draw." In posthumous editions, however, this has been altered to "for an artist to draw."

Above all his contemporaries Thackeray delighted to honour Dickens, and he never lost an opportunity of paying graceful tribute in his books or in his lectures; while his private correspondence is studded with remarks testifying to his sincere appreciation of his great rival's works. "Get 'David Copperfield,' by jingo, it's beautiful; it beats the yellow chap of this month ('Pendennis') hollow:" and writing of the same book in *Punch*, he said: "How beautiful it is, how charmingly fresh and simple! In those admirable touches of tender humour — and I shall call humour, Bob, a mixture of love and wit — who can equal this great genius? There are little words and phrases in his book which are like personal benefits to the reader." Of "A Christmas Carol" he wrote: "It seems to me a national benefit, and to every man or woman who reads it a personal kindness;" and he referred to "The Battle of Life" and the other Christ-



## 230 Some Aspects of Thackeray

mas stories as "these charming little books of Mr. Dickens's which are chorals for Christmas executed in prose."

In the lecture on "Charity and Humour," which Thackeray delivered in 1855 for a charitable purpose, he introduced the following story against himself. "All children ought to love him" [Dickens]; "I know two that do, and read his books ten times for once they peruse the dismal preachments of their father. I know one who, when she is happy, reads 'Nicholas Nickelby;' when she is unhappy, reads 'Nicholas Nickleby;' when she is tired reads 'Nicholas Nickleby;' when she is in bed, reads 'Nicholas Nickleby;' when she has nothing to do, reads 'Nicholas Nickleby;' and when she has finished the book, reads 'Nicholas Nickleby' again. This candid young critic, at ten years of age, said, 'I like Mr. Dickens's books better than your books, papa,' and frequently expressed her desire that the latter author should write a book like one of Mr. Dickens's books. Who can?" This charming passage drew an acknowledgment from Dickens.



REDUCED FACSIMILE OF THE COVER TO THE FIRST  
 EDITION OF "THE ROSE AND THE RING"

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8760

## Thackeray and Dickens 231

"I have read in the *Times* to-day an account of your last night's lecture," he wrote to Thackeray, "and cannot refrain from assuring you in all truth and earnestness that I am profoundly touched by your generous reference to me. I do not know how to tell you what a glow it spread over my heart. Out of its fulness I do entreat you to believe that I shall never forget your words of commendation. If you could wholly know at once how you have moved me, and how you have animated me, you would be the happier, I am very certain."

Again, when Thackeray read the number of "*Dombey and Son*" containing the description of the death of Paul, he put it in his pocket, went to the *Punch* Office, and flung it down before Mark Lemon. "There's no writing against this," he exclaimed excitedly. "One has n't an atom of chance; it's stupendous." And this, too, when "*Vanity Fair*" was in course of publication, and the author of that "little book" was also describing a death scene: "No more

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firing was heard at Brussels — the pursuit rolled miles away. The darkness came down on the field and city, and Amelia was praying for George, who was lying on his face, dead, with a bullet through his heart." And nowadays, in spite of Thackeray's praise, and Lord Jeffrey's — "There has been nothing in literature like the actual dying of that sweet Paul," this death-bed scene is regarded as typical of Dickens at his worst, as "the kind of thing that appears in Sunday-school books about the virtuous little boy that died!"

Thackeray, however, was too keen a critic unduly to depreciate his own writings.

"Have you read Dickens? Oh! it is charming! brave Dickens!" he wrote to Mrs. Brookfield. "It has some of his very prettiest touches, those inimitable touches, which make such a great man of him; and the reading of the book has done another author a great deal of good. In the first place, it pleases the other author to see that Dickens, who has long left off alluding to the author's works, has been copying the

## Thackeray and Dickens 233

O. A., and greatly simplifying his style, and overcoming the use of fine words. By this the public will be the gainer, and 'David Copperfield' will be improved by taking a lesson from 'Vanity Fair.' Secondly, it has put me on my mettle, for ah! madame, all the mettle was out of me, and I have been dreadfully and curiously cast down this month past. I say, secondly, it has put me on my mettle, and made me feel that I must do something: that I have fame, and name, and family, to support."

Indeed, Thackeray was constrained to admit that Dickens was not a deep thinker, but, he said, "he has a clear and a bright-eyed intelligence, which is better than philosophy. I think he is equal to Fielding and Smollett — at any rate to Smollett. He is not such a scholar as Fielding was." This, then, was the greatest difference between them: other things being equal, Thackeray's literary culture was far wider. He was thereby enabled thoroughly to appreciate the many beauties of Dickens's

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work. The latter, unfortunately, was not a discerning critic of writing other than that of his own kind, and read little and thought less of the master stylist of his day. "He" [Dickens] "can't forgive me for my success with 'Vanity Fair' — as if there were not room in the world for both of us," Thackeray wrote.

Regarded from almost any point of view these two great men present a striking contrast. Dickens at twenty-five was famous as the author of "Sketches by Boz" and "Pickwick," and within the next ten years had published "Oliver Twist," "Nicholas Nickleby," "the Old Curiosity Shop," "Barnaby Rudge," "Martin Chuzzlewit," and the Christmas books. Thackeray, who was a year older, in his twenty-fifth year, entirely unknown, contributed a short story entitled "The Professor" to *Bentley's Miscellany*, then under the editorship of Dickens, and in the pages of which "Oliver Twist" was appearing as a serial. In his thirty-seventh year he made his first serious bid for fame with "Vanity Fair," which, after

No. 1.]

JANUARY.

[PRICE 1s.



# VANITY FAIR.

PEN AND PENCIL SKETCHES OF ENGLISH SOCIETY.

BY W. M. THACKERAY,

Author of "The Irish Sketch Book;" "Journes from Cornhill to Grand Cairo;" of "Jeanie's Diary" and the "bush Papers" in "Punch;" &c. &c.

LONDON:

PUBLISHED AT THE PUNCH OFFICE, 65, FLEET STREET.

J. HADFIELD, EDINBURGH; J. WILSON, GLASGOW; J. WOLANSKY, DUBLIN.

1847.

[Verbury & Sons, Printers, Whittier.]

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MONTHLY PART OF "VANITY FAIR"

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2000-00-00

the fashion set by Dickens, was issued in monthly parts.

Their methods of working were different. Dickens was industrious in a manner that Thackeray could never claim to be. The former never doubted his powers, the latter always mistrusted his hold on the public. Even so late as 1849 he endeavoured to obtain a Government appointment. "You are a good and lovable adviser and M. P.," he wrote to his friend Monckton Milnes, "but I cannot get the Magistrate's place, not being eligible. I was only called to the bar last year, and they require barristers of seven years' standing. Time will qualify me, however, and I hope to be able to last six years in the literary world; for though I shall write, I daresay, very badly, yet the public won't find it out for some time, and I shall live on my past reputation. It is a pity, to be sure. If I could get a place and rest, I think I could do something better than I have done, and leave a good and lasting book behind me; but Fate is overruling." What a longing for rest from the

## 236 Some Aspects of Thackeray

never-ceasing writing and revising is here! But while the pathos is marked, a smile cannot be suppressed as one thinks of Thackeray, who had not then written "Esmond" or "The Newcomes," hoping to be able to live for six years in the literary world by trading on his past reputation. Dickens, less sensitive, never doubted but that he could suit the public, though he lived to be threescore and ten. He knew what it wanted and he supplied the want. Thackeray, on the other hand, wrote as he desired to write — and the general reader is not easily trained to appreciate work of a class higher than that to which he has been accustomed.

Thackeray was terribly self-conscious, and usually presented a very poor appearance when he attempted to deliver a speech. "Why can't they get Dickens to take the chair?" he grumbled, when he had to preside at the General Theatrical Fund. "He *can* make a speech — and a good one. . . . *I'm* of no use. . . . They little think how nervous I am; and Dickens does n't know

the meaning of the word." An amusing story is recorded of the occasion when, with Mr. Fields, the well-known American publisher, Thackeray travelled to Manchester to make a speech at the founding of the Free Library Institution in that town. The would-be orator declared that although Dickens and Bulwer Lytton and Sir James Stephen were to precede him, he intended to beat each of them on this occasion. He insisted that Mr. Field should be seated directly in front of him, so that he should not miss a single word. Later, as he rose, he looked at his friend as much as to say, "I'll show you what speaking is." He began fluently, was excellent for two minutes, and then, in the midst of a most earnest sentence, stopped suddenly, gave a look of comic despair . . . and sat down. "My boy," he said, when the meeting was over, "my boy, you have accidentally missed hearing one of the finest speeches ever prepared by a great British orator." Again, Thackeray hated the lecture desk, while Dickens declared he never felt the least

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diffidence in addressing an audience. The former appeared on the platform simply as a well-bred gentleman reading, to a large circle of friends, certain essays with which he was well acquainted; the latter gave dramatic readings from his books.

There are many meetings between the two men recorded, notably when they were both staying at Boulogne in 1854, and at the private theatricals at Tavistock House in 1855. Later in the same year, on October 11th, Dickens took the chair at a grand banquet given at the London Tavern to wish Thackeray God-speed on the eve of his departure to America to deliver the Lectures on the Georges, and proposed the health of the guest of the evening. Two years later, when Thackeray was canvassing at Oxford, he sent Dickens a droll note urging him to "come down and make a speech, and tell them who I am, for I doubt whether more than two of the electors have ever heard of me, and I think there may be as many as six or eight who have heard of you." But Dickens did not go.

[November.]

No. I.

Price 1s.

THE HISTORY  
OF  
PENDENNIS.



HIS FORTUNES AND MISFORTUNES,  
HIS FRIENDS AND HIS GREATEST ENEMY.

BY

W. M. THACKERAY,

Author of "Vanity Fair," the "Book of Snobs," &c. &c.

LONDON: BRADBURY & EVANS, 11, DOUVERIE STREET.

J. HENRI, EDINBURGH; T. MURRAY, GLASGOW; AND J. M'GLASHAN, DUBLIN.

Bradbury & Evans,

1845



Printed, &c.

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Real

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And then came the unfortunate Edmund Yates affair. Into the details of this quarrel it is unnecessary to enter. At the time it was believed (and the belief has not yet been refuted), that Dickens, acting for Yates, conducted the matter in a spirit hostile to Thackeray. Mr. Yates has since declared that there was no real intimacy or anything like friendship between the two men, and he asserted that Thackeray was more angry with Dickens than with the original offender, who, much to his detriment, was made the subject of a trial of strength between them. Mr. Jeffreson has supported this opinion by avowing that Thackeray said to him, "You must not think, young 'un, I am quarrelling with Mr. Yates, *I am hitting the man behind him.*" How far these statements are accurate it is not difficult to determine. Certainly if jealousy existed between the two men, it was not on Thackeray's side. No man with fewer literary jealousies and animosities ever existed. But it must be admitted that it was Dickens the author rather than Dickens the man



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whom he admired. "Genial? Yes," he once said of him. "But frank" — and a twinkle came over the spectacles — "well, frank as an oyster." As a result of the affair, the novelists did not speak for some years. At last they met on the steps of the Athenæum Club a few days before the Christmas of 1863. They passed each other, then Thackeray turned back, and with outstretched hand went up to Dickens and said he could no longer bear to be on any but the old terms of friendship. "I saw him . . . shortly before Christmas at the Athenæum Club," Dickens has recorded, "when he told me he had been in bed three days — that after these attacks he was troubled with cold shiverings which quite took the work out of him, and that he had it in his mind to try a new remedy which he described. He was very cheerful, and looked very bright."

A few days later Dickens was looking down into the grave of his great rival. "You will have heard about poor Thackeray's death — sudden and yet not sudden — for

he had long been alarmingly ill," Dickens wrote to a friend. "At the solicitation of Mr. Smith and some of his friends I have done what I would gladly have excused myself from doing if I felt I could, written a couple of pages about him in what was his own magazine. Therein I have tried so far as I could, with his mother and children before me, to avoid the fulsome and injudicious trash that has been written about him in the papers. . . . You can have no idea of the vile stuff . . . people who would have beslavered him living, began to bespatter him dead."

## CHAPTER XI

### *The Cult of Thackeray*

**I** WAS reading the other day of a man at a public dinner many years ago who, proposing the toast of literature, concluded: "I drink to the health of two of the greatest forces in fiction in the nineteenth century, Dackens and Thickeray . . . no, no, I mean Dackeray and Thickens." With a mighty effort he pulled himself together, and began again: "Gentlemen, I drink to the health of Thackens and Dickeray." Then he sat down, pleased at having extricated himself from the muddle.

The anecdote is trivial, but, in a way, typical. As Beaumont and Fletcher are always allied in the popular mind, so Thackeray and Dickens are always contrasted. The result is identical. The thought of one writer conjures up the other. In the midst of a group of people say something about

## The Cult of Thackeray 243

Thackeray, and you will be bombarded with statements about Dickens.

It is sometimes said the men were not rivals. As well say they were angels. For many years Thackeray envied Dickens his popularity and financial success; for ever Dickens was jealous of Thackeray's style. Undoubtedly Thackeray was spurred to fresh effort by each new success of his great contemporary.

Even to-day there are few who will assert that they read with equal pleasure the works of both writers. Mr. Andrew Lang is a notable exception, but he is a man of letters with tastes unusually catholic. As Lowell said, Dickens is a satiriser, Thackeray a satirist. The former is undoubtedly the gift which attracts the multitude. Readers of all classes appreciate Dickens; it is rare that an admirer of Thackeray's works is found among the unlettered.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the cult of Thackeray is not so extensive as that of the author of "Pickwick." Until recently there was no Titmarsh Club, and

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even to-day there is no Thackeray Fellowship, including the two millionaires recently claimed as adherents of Dickens. No doubt the absence of the millionaires is to be regretted, but possibly it is an advantage to escape the attentions of the worthy plain folk. Perhaps there is no greater difference between the Dickensians and the Thackerayans than that the former boast of the favour with which their master is regarded by the uneducated, and that the latter are profoundly indifferent to such distinction.

The admirers of Thackeray and the worshippers of Dickens are as a regiment to an army. Yet, happily, every day brings fresh adherents to the standard of the author of "Esmond." Articles on his merits as a novelist, poet, parodist, lecturer, artist, appear frequently in the periodicals. Every detail of his life is eagerly discussed. The discovery of an article by him is heralded far and wide. Mr. Whibley says the search for Thackeray's contributions to *Fraser's Magazine* has become a recognized parlour-game for the cultured. A collection of his

MR. THACKERAY'S NEW MONTHLY WORK.

THE  
**NEWCOMES**



EDITED BY  
**ARTHUR PENNENNIS ESQ.**

ILLUSTRATED BY RICHARD DOYLE.

LONDON: BRADBURY AND EVANS, 11, BOUVERIE STREET.  
1853.

No. 1.

OCTOBER.

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## The Cult of Thackeray 245

letters attracts much attention. Even his "country" is not neglected; and during the last few years several English publishers have thought it worth while to bring out editions of his works.

In the United States Thackeray has always aroused more interest than in his own land. So early as 1838 the "Yellow-plush Correspondence" was reprinted there; and in the following year the "Memoirs of Major Gahagan" were taken from the pages of the *New Monthly Magazine* and treated with similar honours. These publications at once attracted attention; and Mr. N. P. Willis, visiting England, hastened to secure for his paper, the *Corsair*, the services of their author, whom he described as "one of the cleverest and most brilliant of periodical-writers." His minor writings were collected years before there was any demand for them here; and American publishers have vied with one another in issuing complete editions.

Even in America, however, Thackeray has never eclipsed Dickens in point of sales.



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Entering a bookstore in South Carolina, Thackeray inquired how many copies of "The Newcomes" had been sold. He was informed that the first order was for three hundred, and that two hundred had subsequently been required. He then asked how many copies of "Bleak House" had been sold. He learnt that the first order had been for five hundred, and the repeat order for six hundred. "I ask these questions wherever I go," he said, "and the answers are the same everywhere." He always insisted that five copies of Dickens's books were sold for every one of his own.

Yet the London representative of an American firm, famous for its reprints of classical authors, said the other day that Thackeray, in spite of the fact that he is read more and more every year, presents a knotty point for publishers. For the sake of uniformity, to prevent a gap in their catalogues, each great publishing house feels it incumbent to bring out an edition; but it does so, if not actually in fear and trembling, at least with no enthusiasm so far as the

## The Cult of Thackeray 247

counting-house is concerned. The fact of the matter is that the great novels sell, but there is astonishingly little demand for the minor works. Now, as in a new edition, the great novels — "Vanity Fair," "Pendennis," "Esmond," "The Newcomes," "The Virginians," "Philip," — are given in six volumes, while there are about twenty-one volumes in all, the reader with a turn for figures may work out the chances of a satisfactory profit.

Some credit for the increase of interest in Thackeray is undoubtedly due to the Thackeray enthusiasts. Prominent among these, naturally enough, is Lady Ritchie, whose biographical introductions to an edition of her father's works attracted much attention. Mr. Herman Merivale and Sir Frank T. Marzials may claim a share in the good work, for their monograph on Thackeray is the best that has been issued. It seems inconceivable that a more admirably written, more sympathetic memoir of the author can ever be penned. Mention must be made of Sir Leslie Stephen, Dr. John Brown, and

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Richard Herne Shepherd; and, among present-day writers, of Mr. M. H. Spielmann, the historian of *Punch*, and the authority upon all matters concerning Thackeray's dealings with that periodical; and Mr. Walter Jerrold, who edited Messrs. Dent's dainty edition, which will always occupy a unique place by virtue of Mr. C. E. Brock's delightful illustrations.

Across the ocean, enthusiasts, past and present, must be counted not by units, but by battalions; but since this is not a catalogue, only a few can be named: Mr. J. T. Fields, publisher and man of letters; Mr. Evert A. Duyckinck, the editor of the first edition of the minor works; Mr. Horace E. Scudder, the editor of the 1889 edition; and the famous collectors, Mr. Frederick S. Dickson—the greatest authority on Thackeray's very complicated bibliography—Mr. W. T. Bixby; and Major William H. Lambert, whose collection of Thackeray editions and manuscripts is unrivalled.

The influence of Dickens upon writers has been stronger, numerically, at least, than

No. 1.]

[ NOVEMBER. ]

[ Price 1s.

# THE VIRGINIANS

A TALE OF THE LAST CENTURY.

BY W. M. THACKERAY.



LONDON:

BRADBURY AND EVANS, 11, DOUVERIE STREET.

1857.

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Mr. G. W. H. H. H.

## The Cult of Thackeray 249

that of Thackeray because there can be no doubt that it is easier to follow the former, though his excellence is as difficult of attainment. A hearty style and an exaggerated domesticity: by these shall ye know the imitators of the inimitable author of "David Copperfield."

Thackeray has no obvious imitators. He does not lend himself easily even to the parodist. Read some lines of Lover's burlesque, which is not only the worst parody that Lover ever wrote, but probably the worst ever written. It is cast in the form of a letter refusing to become a member of a committee appointed to adjudicate upon prose poems written in honour of the Burns Centenary.

"A strange compliment, in sooth, to be asked to have one's ears scratched with the wretched rhymes and false metres in which some hundreds of poetasters will measure of the contents of their poetic gasometers, whose emanations are more likely to be remarkable for mephitism than brilliancy."

Could anything be more unlike Thackeray, whose style was at least as near perfection

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as that of any of his contemporaries, and who, whatever his faults, never wrote a sentence that was not simple and lucid?

Yet the influence of Thackeray may be detected in some quarters. By right of seniority, Mr. W. E. Norris shall be mentioned first; and after him Mr. Percy White. If the name of Mr. G. S. Street is put third, it is because many men of letters have a grudge against him. In an age when the general complaint is that every one writes, and that every one writes too much, those who know Mr. Street's work complain that he writes too little. If he owes a debt of sentiment to Thackeray, he is a writer so distinctive that we may be sure the debt would gratefully be cancelled by the creditor.

This is not the place to enter into the question of the value of Thackeray's contributions to literature; still, this paper may conclude with the remark — there are few who will deny that he has achieved the place he desired to occupy when he said to a friend, "I wish one day to rank with the classical writers."

## CHAPTER XII

### *Thackeray and the Stage*

**I**F we have made ourselves familiar with a famous work of fiction in an unillustrated copy, and subsequently come across an illustrated edition of the same book, it is long odds that we are dissatisfied with the plates. Indeed, it is almost certain that we quarrel with the artist's conception of the characters, let the artist be ever so distinguished. We had always conceived the hero tall, broad, and fair; the villain dark, narrow and swarthy; or vice versa; and we feel ourselves cheated when we look at their counterfeit presentments, and behold them depicted as other than they are in our mind's eye. The case is parallel with that of an adaptation for the stage of a classic novel, and I suppose that it was with mixed feelings that admirers of "The Newcomes" heard of Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree's production



## 252 Some Aspects of Thackeray of a dramatic version at His Majesty's Theatre.

Pre-eminent among the conflicting emotions is the fear that the adapter, however skilful he may be, cannot have done justice to the book. The first question we ask ourselves is: How can he possibly have compressed into the three hours' traffic of the stage all the incidents and all the characters? A moment's reflection assures us that he will have made no such impossible attempt, and that he has selected a few prominent characters and attached them to an incident or a series of incidents. Then we wonder which characters and which incidents will be presented, and we argue about them and discuss their suitability with the greatest interest. Nowadays, the bookish section of the public is inclined rather to hold aloof from the theatre where the plays produced may have great merits but usually lack any literary qualities; but such a piece as "Colonel Newcome" surely draws them all.

In spite of the difficulties presented by works that depend more on atmosphere than



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**SIR HERBERT BEERBOHM TREE AS COLONEL  
NEWCOME**

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## Thackeray and the Stage 253

plot, and more on characterisation than situation, there have been several adapters of Thackeray's books for the stage.

"Jeames's Diary" was dramatised before it had run its course in *Punch*, where the close of the narrative left Jeames happy and contented, save that "a written version of his adventures has been produced at the Princess's Theatre, 'without your leaf or by your leaf.'" That was in 1846; and it was not until thirty-two years later that Mr. John Hollingshead produced at the Gaiety Theatre Mr. (now Sir F. C.) Burnand's "Jeames: a New and Original Comedy," with Mr. Edward Terry as De La Pluche, and Miss Ellen Farren as Mary Ann Hoggins.

"Vanity Fair" has had many theatrical adventures. "We all set to work on 'Vanity Fair' with our mind's eye set on Marie Bancroft for Becky, and Bancroft for 'Dobbin of Ours,' and Fred Yonge for Rawdon, and Hare for the Marquis of Steyne," Clement Scott has recorded. "That was for the old Prince of Wales's. Tom Hood tried it.

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Arthur Sketchley tried it, every one more or less breaking down." A version was produced at Leeds in 1882, but it was Mr. J. M. Barrie who first set the ball really rolling in 1893, with the presentation of the scene in which Becky (Miss Janet Achurch), fallen upon evil days at Pumpernickel-Weimar, makes her last desperate — and successful — attempt to ensnare Jos Sedley (Mr. Edmund Maurice). This was followed eight years later by Mr. Balsillie's version (with the Duchess of Richmond's ball scene), produced at Croydon by Miss Annie Hughes, who, of course, played Becky, with Mr. Wigney Percyval as "the wicked nobleman," and Miss Kate Bishop as Miss Crawley; and about the same time appeared at the Prince of Wales's Theatre, the successful Hichens-Gordon-Lennox adaptation, with a very long cast (from which Dobbin was unaccountably omitted), including Miss Marie Tempest as Becky, Mr. Leonard Boyne as Rawdon, and Mr. Gilbert Hare as Lord Steyne. In America there have been at least three "Vanity Fair" plays, one so

## Thackeray and the Stage 255

early as 1849 by the actor-dramatist, Mr. John Brougham, another by the dramatist-actor, Mr. George Fawcett Rowe, and a third, in 1899, by Mr. Langdon Mitchell, with Mrs. Fiske as Becky.

After "Vanity Fair," "Esmond" has had most attraction for the adapters. A version was written for Mr. E. H. Sothorn, and another by Mr. W. H. Wills was prepared for Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, and came into the possession of Sir Henry Irving, by whom it was handed over to the amateur dramatic club that bears his name, which gave a performance of it in June, 1893. Then Mr. T. Edgar Pemberton tried his hand, and the result of his labours saw the light in the provinces in 1897. With regard to Thackeray's other books there has been an adaptation of "The Rose and the Ring," by Mr. H. Saville Clarke, with music by Mr. Walter Slaughter; and I have read of a one-act play, "The Fotheringay," given by the Old Comedy Company, which was based upon the earlier chapters of "Pendennis."

Thackeray in his early days wrote "Read-

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ing a Poem," a sketch in dialogue treating of the days when Bungay and Bacon, the publishers in "Pendennis," issued "Keepsakes" and "Spring Annuals," and would pay large sums to obtain the poems — or at least, the *names* — of titled folk. The satire is keen, but best of all are the descriptions of the characters. Mr. Bogle — "the celebrated publisher in a publisher's costume of deep black." Mr. Bludyer — "an English gentleman of the Press, editor of the *Weekly Bravo* . . . should smell very much of stale smoke, and need not shave for two or three days before performing the part."

It was always a grief to Thackeray that he could not write a play that managers would produce. It is, of course, well known that he wrote a comedy, "The Wolves and the Lamb," which, when Buckstone and Wigan declined, he converted into "Lovel the Widower." But he made the change with regret, and when some one asked him for permission to turn "Lovel the Widower" into a play, it is doubtful whether he was pleased or grieved. "The last act is so very



**MRS. FISKE AS BECKY SHARP**

*See page 255*





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## Thackeray and the Stage 257

lively and amusing that I cannot but think Mr. Wigan and Mr. Buckstone were wrong concerning it," he told his correspondent. "I thought I could write a play," he said on another occasion, "but it seems I can't." However, since he could not have "The Wolves and the Lamb" performed in public, he gave private representations of it when he moved into "the reddest house in all the town" at Palace-green, and he took part in it himself, but, declining a speaking part on the ground that he could not possibly learn such poor words, he contented himself with an appearance as the clerical father just before the fall of the curtain, when he held out his hands and said in pantomime to actors and audience, "Bless you, my children."

Thackeray was always happy in a theatre. Once he asked a friend if he loved "the play," and received the qualified answer, "Ye-es, I like a good play." "Oh, get out!" the great man retorted. "I said *the* play. You don't even understand what I mean!" And FitzGerald went one night with Thack-

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eray in the pit to witness a piece which, with its mock sentiment, its indifferent humour, and ultra-theatrical scenes bored him so terribly that he was about to suggest they should leave the theatre, when Thackeray turned to him, and exclaimed delightedly: "By G—d! is n't it splendid!"

## CHAPTER XIII

### *Thackeray's "New Sketch Book" <sup>1</sup>*

**T**HE legend on the back of this volume runs: "W. M. Thackeray: The New Sketch Book. Edited by Robert S. Garnett," and neither there nor on the title-page is given any indication that the collection of papers is only *believed* by the editor to have been written by the great novelist. Not until one reads the admirable introduction is it realised that the articles appeared anonymously in the *Foreign Quarterly Review* between 1842 and 1844, and, so far as Mr. Garnett is aware, the authorship is proved only by the all too often misleading suggestions of "internal evidence." The "find," however, has been accepted as genuine — so

<sup>1</sup> "W. M. Thackeray: The New Sketch Book." Being Essays now first collected from "The Foreign Quarterly Review." Edited, with an Introduction by Robert S. Garnett, with an Appendix on the Authors Criticised. 7s. 6d. net. (Alston Rivers).

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far as most of the papers are concerned — by such weighty critics as Mr. W. L. Courtney and Mr. Walter Jerrold.

I am fortunate enough to be in a position now to bring forward some important evidence bearing upon the authorship of the papers in question, obtained by following up a clue suggesting itself to me by a few lines in the late Rev. Whitwell Elwin's interesting account of "Thackeray in Search of a Profession" (*The Monthly Review*, October, 1904): — "In his review, in 1843, of the rabid political verses by the German Herwegh, whose panacea for social evils was the extermination by civil war of rulers and clergy, Thackeray, in ridicule of his savage rant, said that twenty years earlier some young philosophers might possibly in part have applauded his doctrines at a Union debate. Arthur Pendennis was one of these precocious philanthropists." Appended to this was a footnote referring to the Herwegh paper: "In the *Foreign Quarterly Review*, April, 1843." At the time I thought nothing of this, though I looked at the Herwegh paper; but it recurred to me



**WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY**

From a drawing by Samuel Laurence

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at the time when “The New Sketch Book” was published. The reference to this periodical struck me for the first time as curious, since it was not then generally known that Thackeray contributed to this long-forgotten quarterly; and it occurred to me, belatedly enough, that he who wrote the footnote might probably have some further knowledge on the subject of Thackeray’s connection with this *Review*. I wrote to Mr. John Murray (to whom I here express my thanks) to ask if he could tell me whether the note was in the original manuscript of the late editor of the *Quarterly Review*, or whether it had been added by another hand. It transpires that it was inserted by the author’s son, who has supplied further information, which, by his courtesy, I am permitted to make use.

Mr. Elwin found among his father’s Thackeray memoranda — it is an open secret that the late Rev. Whitwell Elwin intended to write the life of Thackeray — the following:

“List of Thackeray’s articles in *Foreign*



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*Quarterly Review*. — July 1842. The German in England; Oct. 1842. Travelling Romancers. M. Dumas on the Rhine; April 1843. Georg Herwegh's Poems. — Vol. 31; April 1843. Les Mystères de Paris. By Eugène Sue. 6 vols. Paris. 1843. — Vol. 31; Oct. 1843. Death and Dying in France. — Vol. 32; Oct. 1843. French Romancers on England. Le Bananier, par Frédéric Soulie. — Vol. 32; Jan. 1844. New Accounts of Paris. — Vol. 32. — Mainly a review of 'Lettres Parisiennes, par Emile de Girardin.' I take this article to be Thackeray's from internal evidence. At the close he briefly notices 'Paris and its People. By the Author of "Random Recollections of the House of Commons."' In *Fraser's Magazine* for Dec. 1843, he has a separate article entirely devoted to Grant's book."

The above has been copied verbatim by Mr. Elwin, who thinks that from the last note his father had more authority than "internal evidence" for attributing the rest of the list positively to Thackeray. "John Forster edited the *Foreign Quarterly Review*

at this time, and my father may have known from him that Thackeray contributed to it,” Mr. Elwin remarks. “But all Forster’s papers passed through my father’s hands as literary executor, and I do not doubt that the list was derived from them in some way, and that it is authoritative as far as it goes. It does not follow that it is complete, but my father searched the *Foreign Quarterly Review* for that period, and I have no doubt it includes all he thought to be Thackeray’s.”

For these papers additional evidence can be produced. To take two or three at hazard! Compare the review of “Paris and its People,” in “The New Sketch Book,” with the acknowledged paper on the same book in *Fraser’s Magazine*, “Grant in Paris,” which appeared a month earlier (December, 1843). Each article is scathing, though in the latter the critic used all his power of invective upon Grant, who was one of the favourite butts in *Punch*. In each there is mention of the fact that Grant was unacquainted with the French language; in each are pointed out the same two blunders, Palais Royale and

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Chateaubriand; in each are references to Grant's statements that the most elegant ladies of the land sit alongside of dirty drivers in hack-cabriolets, and that the gentry of Paris are in the habit of dining at thirty-sous eating-houses, which eating-houses provide a meal that the traveller regards as luxury! It is surely unnecessary to make further analysis.

Next take the review of "Les Mystères de Paris," and read it, remembering what Thackeray in a little-known letter said of the works of Eugène Sue.

And who but the author of "Catherine" could have written this passage anent one of the characters in that remarkable novel: "This sum of money the young woman spent very carelessly, and having given away her last fifty francs to a poor woman in distress (who was afterwards murdered by her husband), the goualeuse had no other resource but shame, and became the creature of the ogress in whose house she lived. With all this, and although she had been accustomed to drinking, and although she had been edu-



*Wm Thackeray*

**WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY**

**From the portrait by Samuel Laurence, 1852**

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cated in a prison, and although she earned her livelihood in the way indicated, perhaps the world never contained a more lovely, fascinating, delicate, sweet creature than the goualeuse”?

Lastly, read a passage from the review of Madame de Girardin’s “Lettres Parisiennes:” “And is it so? Is it true that the women of Madame de Girardin’s country, and of fashionable life, are the heartless, odious, foolish, swindling, smiling, silly, selfish creatures she paints them? Have they no sense of religious duty, no feeling of maternal affection, no principle of conjugal attachment, no motive except variety, for which they will simulate passion (it stands to reason that a woman who does not love husband and children can love nobody) and break all law? Is this true — as every French romance that has been written time out of mind, would have us believe? Is it so common that Madame de Girardin can afford to laugh at it as a joke, and talk of it as a daily occurrence? — and if so, if we must take the Frenchman’s own word for it — in spite of

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all the faults, and all the respectability, and all the lord-worship, and all the prejudice, and all the insoluble dulness of Baker Street — *Miss* (the young and amiable English lady before apostrophised) had much better marry in the Portman Square than in the Place Vendôme quarter." Of this passage, as Mr. W. L. Courtney says of another, surely the reader will be inclined to say, "Aut Thackeray, aut Diabolus."

Of the seven papers identified, of one — "Dumas on the Rhine" — further proof of authorship is to be found in Fitzpatrick's "Life of Lever," and it has therefore been included in a recent edition of Thackeray's works (Macmillan; Vol. XV.: "The Fitz-Boodle Papers, etc.;" 1904); while another — "Death and Dying in France" — is now first made known. The remaining five are included among the eleven papers in "The New Sketch Book." It cannot be denied, however, that while mention in the Rev. Whitwell Elwin's list makes Mr. Garnett's assumptions appear accurate so far as the

five articles are concerned, the omission of the other six renders very doubtful indeed the suggestion that they, too, were written by Thackeray. Still, they must not be dismissed without considerations. Take, first, the reviews of Victor Hugo's "Le Rhin" (April, 1842), and Alfred Michiel's "Angleterre" (July, 1844), which appeared respectively before the first and after the last article mentioned by Elwin, who, therefore may or may not have read them. It is certainly difficult not to accept as from Thackeray's pen the paper on Victor Hugo's book, after listening to what Mr. Garnett has to say on the subject. "In 1842 Thackeray wrote to Edward FitzGerald that he had read no good books or novels worth mentioning, but scores of volumes of history, and, by way of amusement, Victor Hugo's new book on the Rhine. 'He is very great, and writes like a God Almighty,' continues Thackeray, and he explains that he has been trying to write about Hugo's letters that day, only squeezing out one page. A remark of Hugo's about looking at the stars — that night is as



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it were the normal colour of heaven — struck him, and he says that to him there is something awful in it, and that he is certain that time and space are dark blue. The tone of the letter and of the review are so strikingly similar as to admit no doubt of the identity of the writer. ‘He is very great, and writes like a God Almighty,’ says the letter-writer, and on the first page of the review — that page which Thackeray squeezed out so laboriously — we find him parodying Victor Hugo, who *is* very great; and on the third page he shows him posed precisely as a divinity. And a little further on we find him quoting and admiring — with a touch of generosity which is charming in the contrast — a passage of description of the night sky, such a passage as that which had so moved Edward FitzGerald’s correspondent.”

Surely this is conclusive so far as internal evidence ever can be conclusive. But, although Mr. Garnett regards the scathing notice of Michiel’s “Angleterre” as “thoroughly typical of the critic’s mature talent,”



WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

After one of his later photographs, taken by the London Stereoscopic  
Company

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I would not like to say more than that Thackeray may have written it. It is true that the geniality that is commonly regarded as a feature of the master's writings is wanting, but then it must be remembered that the contributions to the *Foreign Quarterly Review* were written in the days when he sent to *Fraser's Magazine* articles full of virulent abuse.

After careful study of the review of Dumas' "Crimes Célèbres," I am not inclined to attribute it to Thackeray, and I am of the same opinion with regard to the review of Balzac's "Monographie de la Paresse Parisienne," although the observations upon the woodcut illustrations read like him. Mr. Garnett believes the paper on Gutznow's "Briefe aus Paris" was written by Thackeray and revised by the Editor of the *Foreign Quarterly Review*, but I cannot find many passages that to me seem to have been indited by Thackeray. We are, however, on less debatable ground with the only item not yet mentioned, "English History and Character on the French Stage," for a comparison with

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a similar article in "The Paris Sketch Book" will convince most people of the identity of the author.

Though these papers can add nothing to Thackeray's reputation, and though some of them are mere journeyman's work, yet, without claiming for them high value as criticism — for Thackeray, indeed, was insular in his prejudices — they are certainly most entertaining to read. Mr. Garnett has done well to reprint them, even in the face of the prejudice that exists in some quarters against the "resurrection" of the minor writings of a great author; and it is right that, in addition, grateful acknowledgment should be made of his services as editor, his excellent introduction, and his valuable notes on the authors criticised.

## CHAPTER XIV

### *Mr. Whibley on Thackeray*<sup>1</sup>

**T**HERE is no doubt that the popularity of Thackeray increases by leaps and bounds. A certain section of the public has always been faithful to the author of "Esmond," but every day fresh adherents are crowding round the standard of the great novelist of the nineteenth century. Looking back, it seems as if Lady Ritchie's Biographical Introduction to an edition of her father's works, and a "Life of William Makepeace Thackeray," both published in 1899, gave an impetus to the movement. Certainly, they afforded much food for discussion. Interest in Thackeray having been stimulated, various collections of the lesser known writings of the great man

<sup>1</sup> "William Makepeace Thackeray." By Charles Whibley. "Modern English Writers."

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appeared in quick succession — “Contributions to the *National Standard* and the *Constitutional*,” “Stray Papers,” and “The Hitherto Unidentified Contributions to *Punch*.” Publishers soon realised there was an ever-increasing demand for Thackeray’s works, and several new editions, each possessing some special feature, have been offered to the public. Messrs. Nelson issued a thin paper edition; Messrs. Dent an edition, edited by Mr. Walter Jerrold, one of the leading authorities on the novelist, and illustrated by Mr. C. E. Brock; and Messrs. Macmillan the first absolutely complete edition of Thackeray’s writings and drawings, edited by the present writer. At this moment Messrs. Macmillan are reissuing their edition with the special feature of five hundred illustrations by Mr. Harry Furniss; and Messrs. Smith, Elder and Company are bringing out an admirable Centenary edition which includes Lady Ritchie’s Introduction. Contributions to the reviews upon the various aspects of Thackeray are of frequent occurrence, and

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it rarely happens that a month passes without the publication in England or America of a paper treating of Thackeray as novelist or essayist, as lecturer or poet, as artist or art-critic, as moralist or cynic or humourist. This tends to prove that Thackeray, once the spoiled darling of the cultured, has now found favour in the eyes of the great mass of educated readers. The change was for a long time so slight as to be almost imperceptible, but during the last few years it has been so rapid, that it is well to pause for a moment to consider what is Thackeray's place in literature — according to the new and somewhat altered view.

Mr. Charles Whibley's long-promised monograph on Thackeray has at last been published, and there is no doubt it will be very widely read. Mr. Whibley has won his spurs as an author with "Studies in Frankness," "A Book of Scoundrels," and other volumes pleasant to read; and he has proved himself a clear-sighted and erudite critic, whose opinions are usually



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sound and frequently suggestive. Indeed, Messrs. Blackwood may be congratulated upon having induced him to write the Thackeray volume of their excellent "Modern English Writers" series.

Mr. Whibley is not to be blamed because he has nothing new to say concerning Thackeray's life. The life of a man of letters is usually devoid of incident, and though in this particular instance there are some special features of interest, it is highly improbable that there is anything to say that has not been said over and over again. Thackeray's first biographer was John Camden Hotten, and his book was verily a thing of shreds and patches. Later, Anthony Trollope outlined Thackeray's career with no sympathetic pen, but perhaps with more truth than is generally admitted, and then followed Messrs. Hermann Merivale and Frank T. Marzials monograph, Lady Ritchie's Biographical Introductions, and the present writer's "Life of William Makepeace Thackeray." It is to be expected that at some remote date,

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and perhaps by some writer as yet unborn, an "official" biography will appear — but even such a work will contain little that is unknown, save, possibly, some hitherto unprinted letters. Mr. Whibley's book, therefore, is interesting chiefly as a critical review.

It has been stated so frequently and with such persistence that Thackeray's style is as near perfection as is humanly possible, that Mr. Whibley's remark that he is far from satisfied with that style has the effect of a cold douche. "His words flow like snow-water upon the mountain-side. He could no more restrain the current of his prose than a gentle slope could turn a rivulet back upon its course. His sentences dash one over the other in an often aimless succession, as though impelled by a force independent of their author," he remarks; and he complains that Thackeray possessed no economy of speech, and that he never used one word if a page and a half could adequately express the meaning. It is impossible to contradict the critic. Thackeray did amble along, often almost aimlessly,

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and he did pile up mountains of words without getting any "forrader;" just as he only too frequently interrupted what slight thread of story there was to interject little essays germane to the narrative. These objections from a lesser man than Mr. Whibley might be dismissed as a protest against novels without plots; but Mr. Whibley is himself too capable an artist to mean only this. He is angry, and his anger is aroused by the feeling that Thackeray did not do his best. He is regretful — and his regret occasionally turns almost to bitterness — because he realises if only Thackeray had been able to write more leisurely, and had not been compelled to live from hand to mouth, as it were, the novelist would have told a better story, and would have more carefully penned the pages in which it was unfolded. "That turning back to the old pages," Thackeray wrote in a Roundabout Paper, "produces anything but elation of mind. Would you not pay a pretty fine to be able to cancel some of them? Ah, the sad old pages,

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the dull old pages!" The critic admits that Thackeray's style is graphic, various, and at times eloquent; and he instances several passages that entitle Thackeray to a high place among English writers — much of "Esmond," Harry Warrington's first visit to England, Denis Duval's journey to London, Barry Lyndon's famous defence of play, and the Waterloo chapters of "Vanity Fair." After all, Thackeray's style at its worst was equal to that of any contemporary novelist; at its best it has been excelled by none.

Mr. Whibley points out that Thackeray's contemporaries believed he was something more than a novelist — a social regenerator; and that Thackeray regarded himself as a moralist. Thackeray never wrote a novel with a purpose, such as "Nicholas Nickleby," or "Man and Wife," or "It is Never too Late to Mend," for he was too great an artist to make that fatal blunder; but he regarded himself as a latter-day "sad and weary, splendid King Ecclesiast," crying his sermon from the modern equivalent of the Mount

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of Hermon. "[Thackeray] the moralist was so tight-bound to the superstitions of his age, that he will probably never appear as great as he did to some of his contemporaries," says Mr. Whibley. Mr. Whibley is on firmer ground when he asserts that there were always two men in Thackeray, the sentimental moralist, and "the keen-eyed ironist, for whom life was an amusing game, whose rules were independent of virtue, and in which the scoundrel was most often victorious." The ironist was sometimes defeated by the sentimentalist, sometimes by the moralist, but when he could have his way unfettered, he drew Barry Lyndon — and in his heart of hearts often admired the knave — and portrayed Becky with more pleasure than the Amelia for whom Dobbin waited too long. *A propos* of "Vanity Fair," Mr. Whibley insists that the logical end of the book is Rawdon Crawley's appointment to the Governorship of Coventry Island, and that the regathering of the threads is a wanton and tedious operation. There is something to be said for this view, only then we should

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have lost the chapters *Am Rhein* and the picture of Becky in her *dégringolade*, which most of us would not miss but with deep regret.

Mr. Whibley writes with enthusiasm of Thackeray as a creator of character. There are few novelists who have such a gallery of characters as can be collected from Thackeray's stories. Think of those universally known. Becky and her husband Rawdon, Major Pendennis, Mirobolant, Costigan, Foker, "J. J.," Ned Bayham, Madame d'Ivry, Mons. le Prince de Moncontour (better known as M. de Florac), Beatrix Esmond, wonderful as a girl, marvellous as an old lady — the catalogue might be continued almost indefinitely. How truly they are described, how minutely, how humanly, and also how humanely. They are more real to many of us, better known to many of us, than the people of flesh and blood we meet every day. Mr. Whibley treats of Thackeray as lecturer, attacking almost with virulence the lecture on Swift; as art critic; and, of course, as novelist and essayist.

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Strangely enough, however, he says no word of Thackeray as the writer of verse; this is surprising, for, though by no means a great poet, Thackeray wrote many charming ballads, though his rhymes were often appalling, his metre not always perfect. There can be little doubt that his ballads will be more widely read and his reputation as a writer of verse be considerably enhanced. Again, though Mr. Whibley mentions that Thackeray studied art, he does not anywhere refer to him as an artist, or as the illustrator of his own works. Mr. Whibley agrees with the critics who have preceded him that "Lovel the Widower" may be disregarded; that "Philip," though built upon an ampler scale, is almost tedious, and frequently shows the weariness of the hand that penned it; and that in "Denis Duval" he recovered his old mastery and displayed his old style — but "Denis Duval," which bade fair to rank with "Esmond," is, alas! but a fragment. Thackeray will go down to posterity as the author of "Vanity Fair" and "Pendennis," of "Barry Lyndon" and the inimitable "Es-

